

"CAGED" by Thyra Samter Winslow A COMPLETE SHORT NOVEL

The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*



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Archibute Gunn

The SMART SET

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The SMART SET

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and
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METAMORPHOSIS

By VanVechten Hostetter

OLD John Gorham lay deep in his easiest chair in his spacious and dim-lighted library. It was evening after a morning of coupon-clipping—irksome enough even with modern labor-saving devices—and an afternoon of reciprocal boring at the club.

It was old John Gorham's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. He knew it because he had read it in the newspapers, damn them. One of them had published pictures of him and Mrs. Gorham, side by side and connected with some fancy scroll work, made out of ticker tape most likely.

He supposed it was a picture of Mrs. Gorham anyway. The newspaper said it was and the newspapers were forever getting things right. And the picture did resemble Mrs. Gorham as he remembered her. Still, he reflected, his memory for faces was rather poor, although he recognized her name easily enough.

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Having developed a doubt, old Gorham was somewhat curious to know if the picture was his wife's. In fact, he was so curious that he was on the point of going up to her boudoir on the third floor for a look at her. But just then he vaguely recalled having heard or read something about her going to Palm Beach. Or was it Camden, Maine?

Still, that may have been last year. And, anyway, he wasn't sure whether the report had her coming or going. Old Gorham was about to ring for a servant to find out if the climb would be of any use, but before he could execute the idea he fell asleep.

* * *

Gorham was awakened by laughter, uproarious and harsh, that filled the great library and awoke echoes among the purple wall hangings. It was laughter that would have chilled his blood if that had not been done already. It was the most malicious and inhuman laugh-

ter he had ever heard and he had listened to a good many experts in his time.

Blinking until his eyes were accustomed to the dim light, old Gorham saw, seated and facing him, the most disgusting and frightful being in the form of a man that he had ever laid eyes on. Gorham felt some emotion of disgust, though, of course, not enough to endanger his dignity and poise. As for being frightened, he was past fearing anything but a tariff for revenue only.

The creature was naked—a huge, misshapen man-beast, incredibly fat and bloated, filling and bursting out the arms of the roomy chair, which creaked and groaned with each new convulsion of mordacious mirth.

Long, curly and coarse hair, tangled and matted, like gold bleached to lifelessness, covered the creature's head and hung over its shoulders. Its eyes, small and set deep in fat, were red and bleary, yet cunning and wicked. From the bulbous nose, upturned and flattened, deep and cruel lines ran to the down-turned corners of the mouth. Between them was a moustache—a score of whitish bristles like a pig's. The lips were fat and puffed out and as the thing chortled revealed teeth, uneven, yellow, fanglike. The creature's cheeks hung below its jaws in rolls of morbid fat and its chin merged into its thick neck.

Around the visitor's waist was a well-filled cartridge belt and in either hairy hand, resting on its fat knees, was an automatic pistol.

The intruder, recovering from a final paroxysm of unearthly laughter, put one

weapon aside, filled a tumbler from Gorham's decanter of Scotch and downed it at a gulp. It smacked its lips vulgarly, bit a chew of tobacco off a plug produced from the cartridge belt and then grinned gloatingly at Gorham.

"Well," it said, "why don't you bid me welcome? Don't you remember me?"

"I'm afraid you have the advantage of me," said Gorham.

"Think hard," said the visitor.

"Who are you and what are you?" asked Gorham with a trace of impatience. "And what are you doing with those pistols?"

"Oh," said the visitor, looking at the weapons pridefully, "they're a little modern equipment I got. Had to, you know—old equipment was artistic enough, but lacked efficiency. I'm in the same business, though—and you?"

"Nothing about me until I know who you are," said Gorham with more animation than he had yet shown.

"Scratch your head," said the creature. "You must remember me."

Gorham scratched and studied his guest keenly.

At last, "It does seem as if I had met you some time or other," he said. "There's something familiar about your face, but I swear I can't place you."

"Keep on trying," said the visitor encouragingly.

Gorham knitted his brows and thought desperately. Presently his face cleared and something of the light of twenty-five years ago came into his eyes.

"Yes, yes, I know you now, but, good Lord, Cupid, how you have changed!"



BY the time a woman has learned how to kiss there is no longer any pleasure in kissing her.

CAGED

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Thyra Samter Winslow

CHAPTER I

LEOTA CLIFFORD was packing her husband's steamer trunk. It was a stupid enough occupation, but it was unbelievably delicious to Leota. Each garment she put into the trunk brought delightful new thoughts into her head.

Leota decided that four sets of medium weight and three sets of light underwear would be sufficient. She folded the awkward garments slowly, tucking into neat squares the unmanageable arms and legs.

—So—Will was going away. He was going to England and would be gone six weeks. Six weeks of freedom! Six weeks of doing what she wanted to do! Six times seven is forty-two—at least Leota thought it was forty-two; she'd have to try it with a pencil, later; arithmetic wasn't one of her strong points—forty-two days of being uncaged! Forty-two days of being herself, of experience, of living!

Leota followed the undergarments with pajamas. There was a button off one of the coats. Almost unconsciously, she got thread and needle from her work-basket and fastened it. There—no more sewing on of buttons for a long, long time! How she hated it—the button-sewing and the things the button-sewing stood for—domesticity, repression, the cage! She threw out her arms in dramatic agony. How had she stood things—all these years? Nine years of married life—and now she was thirty-two. Nine years of life gone, wasted, lost.

Well, thirty-two was still young. Of course, when the six weeks were over, maybe there would be the cage again. But even then, there would be the memory of the open door, freedom. Maybe, she could find a way to keep the door open a little. There might even be a change, some wonderful opportunity—perhaps she would never have to go back into the cage at all. You can't tell, things like that, still—six weeks of freedom, of being unfettered, might point the way. How had she ever stood it?

How had she stood it? A feeling of sudden awakening came to Leota. Of course, all these years she had known that she was caged. But, until now, she had never realized how much she had suffered, how strong and hateful the bars had been. Now the door stood open.

Leota added the shirts, conscientiously choosing Will's favorites. What a stupid fellow Will was, with his worrying over details! Will—even his name sounded hard, unromantic, sluggish. William Burrage Clifford—wasn't it fate to be married to a man with a name like that? No one even called him a compromising Bill or a playful Billy. Just Will. . . . Well, he was going away.

It had never occurred to Leota, until three days before, that there was a possibility of Will's ever going any place, a chance for her own freedom. Then, suddenly, a bounteous gift from the gods, he had announced this sudden trip, with an apology for its suddenness and because he must go alone.

"Someone had to go and start our London office moving smoothly. Had to be me, it seems—firm thinks I understand things pretty well. I'll get back as soon as I can. I know it'll be lonesome for you. Maybe you can get your mother or Ida to come in to keep you company.

Leota had clutched desperately at this gleam of liberty, explaining that her mother, who lived in Rochester with her older sister, probably wouldn't care about taking a trip just then, and that Ida might not want to make new plans, either, after she'd got comfortably settled with Grace. Ida was Will's old-maid sister—wasn't it just like Will to have an old-maid sister?—a pleasant pert little thing, who was always sewing on something or preparing neat addresses for unnecessary club-meetings. Ida wore nose-glasses and looked intellectual. Ida said, "Do you really think so?" when she means "I don't think so at all." She dressed briskly in the morning and was always ready for an early walk, speaking about "the crisp morning air." Ida liked to brag about never wasting time—she was always skipping busily from one useless thing to another. She wore stiff shirt-waists and never had attractive dressing gowns or seemed to need them. She wore cotton lingerie. And Ida had been suggested to her as the person to keep her from being lonely!

"No," Leota had tried to keep her voice even, "I couldn't think of bothering Mother or Ida. Of course I'll be a little lonely and miss you a lot, but I'll manage to get along. It isn't as if we were strangers in New York. We've got so many friends here. I'll look up some of the girls I used to know. And you know I'm on the publicity committee of the bazaar. That will take every minute of the time I can give it. With Katie and Freda sleeping here in the apartment, I won't even feel afraid. Just think—we haven't been separated a day since our marriage, have we? Don't you worry a bit about me, I'll get along—"

Will had had so many things on his

mind he hadn't thought of objecting. Now he was sailing in the morning—six weeks—

Leota finished packing the trunk, counted the handkerchiefs, added half a dozen more for good measure—what ugly things men wore!—

How could she have stood it, this long? What if the trip hadn't come— if the years had gone on and she had grown old, caged—?

Nine years of being caged—!

CHAPTER II

LEOTA remembered the beginning of it—when she was married. At twenty-three, she had entered the cage gladly enough. Of course she hadn't known what it meant, then. She wondered if any girl ever did know. At twenty-three she had been eager to get away from home—a home which had offered little, where there had been three single girls. She hadn't been madly in love with Will Clifford, but she hadn't been exactly in love with anyone else. She had never really loved anyone else—except Jeddy. That was different. She couldn't marry Jeddy, of course. She'd known that. For Jeddy was even more ambitious than she had been. Jeddy, too, wanted money, position. Jeddy and she had been in love, in a way—very young love, nothing definite—dances together, a few remembered walks and drives, some talks, dear little memories, that was all. They had said a great deal about how much they cared, but nothing at all about a future together. Still, Jeddy had been a dear. He had had such attractive ways, quaint fancies, said things that Will could never have understood. Jeddy had read poems to her, odd things, bound in light blue paper covers.

She had married and Jeddy had married and they had attained a little of what they had wanted. She saw his name in the papers, occasionally—Joseph D. Hallidan. Jeddy had not become famous or rich, though his wife was related to rather well-known people and he moved in a circle slightly better,

socially, than her own—one of those many climbing circles, each complete, selfish, pretentious, foundationless, the members of one always endeavoring to step into the circle just above in money and pretence. No, Jeddy had not failed—and yet—Leota wondered if Jeddy ever thought of her. Here they both were, in New York—funny, she never saw him. She could have written him a note, any day, asking him to call—but that would have meant so many things, explanations, Will. Now, while the door was open—why not—it wasn't fair, losing all of the lovely things in life—

Leota knew, now, that when she had married Will she had not understood, fully, about the cage of marriage. She had been glad enough to enter it. She remembered the night she had met Will. She had lived in Westmont and there were no marriageable men there. It had looked as if she would have to stay single for a long time. Will had been in Westmont on business and she had met him at a little party at the Robinsons. He had been good-looking in a solid, square way. Even now she admitted to herself that she had used all of her little tricks on him, tricks accumulated from living in a family of girls, from meeting boys, socially, since she was seventeen. She had been poor and hated Westmont, and Will had had a fair business position with a New York firm. She had felt that Will was as good a catch as she would be able to find.

Six months later they were married and moved to New York. She had thought, then, that she would be free. She felt the bars of the cage just when she most desired to try her freedom. All of the things that she had longed to do when she was single and poor and that she had thought marriage would bring were just the things she couldn't do, married and with a little money.

Before her marriage, Leota had visited New York, occasionally, and had been eager to live there. She had looked into attractive shop windows and up strange, alluring streets, climbing in-

numerable stairs to the galleries of the theaters, envying the people who weren't poor.

Leota, married to Will and living in New York, wasn't so dreadfully poor. But things weren't as she had dreamed them. She found herself one-half of a little married couple, doing conventional, stupid, decent things. She was swallowed up in a middle-class set. Buying in shops, when you have to be careful about monthly bills and when it seems as if all your friends are spending more, had not proved any more entertaining than gazing in the shop-windows. The alluring little streets became commonplace, dusty by-ways or disappeared altogether. At the theater, orchestra seats had not added to the brilliancy or sparkle of the performance. Married, daring epigrams became commonplace; risqué situations seemed stupid.

Will developed a jealousy and a regard for middle-class conventions that Leota had never thought him capable of, if she had thought of it at all—she really hadn't considered Will. It developed that there were things Will's wife could and couldn't do. She couldn't talk, very long, to any other man for one thing, or later Will would say something about "how funny it looked" or "you've got to be careful of appearances." Leota could never go any place, at night, without Will. Leota knew that there were sets—real society, not to mention Bohemian circles—where women dined with other men or lunched with them, where a wife could go places without the presence of her husband. But in Will and Leota Clifford's set these things did not exist.

Leota's days belonged pretty much to herself, though, of course, she was supposed to tell Will where she had been and what she had done and she was not supposed to see other men. Not that Will questioned her closely, but he was quite willing to tell where he had spent his absent hours and he expected equal frankness in reply. During the day Leota attended to her household duties,

wasted time as she wished, joined the various feminine activities that were open to her.

In the evening Will came home at about six and dinner was served half an hour later. Or Leota met Will at his office or at a hotel and had dinner with him. Although he belonged to two clubs Will didn't care for them nor for going places with men. He was "a home body" and bragged of it. They went to the theater, frequently, and Will talked, heavily, of the acting and the plot, on the way home. Or they spent the evening with a few friends, at dinners or informal dances or bridge.

Now it came to Leota with a terrible force that, not once during the whole nine years of her married life, had she had dinner one night without Will. When Will took his short yearly vacations they went, together, to near-by summer hotels or took hackneyed trips. They had had good times, of course, usual, middle-class times. But—always together, as if they had been bound. Why hadn't she rebelled before? How could she have stood it—all these years?

CHAPTER III

LEOTA knew that she had never yearned for a career. There had never been anything she really cared to do. She had painted a little, when a girl, daubs of china painting, spending tedious hours with a Westmont teacher, copying fruit and flowers on white plates, smearing in pale backgrounds, having the pieces fired, adding more details and gold bands for a second firing, polishing the gold with a glass brush. When china painting "went out" she had studied with another teacher, drawing still life in charcoal, collections of vases and bowls, onions and apples, tomatoes and jugs, against a background of seemingly carelessly-draped velvet. She had never taken this seriously, though she liked to think she had talent. She had taken piano lessons, too, for two years, thumping out scales and finger exercises and "first pieces" for an hour each day, glancing at the clock

between notes. She had never tried anything else. Leota was lazy. She disliked every kind of work, anything that needed concentration. She hated the small amount of housework she had had to do at home in Westmont. Will had seemed especially desirable as a husband, then, because he had sufficient money to provide a servant.

She now had a pleasant enough life, as far as that went. She had nice things—in a way—though she always envied women who had more. Her apartment was all right, she supposed. She knew she could have had a small house in the suburbs, instead—Will would have preferred it, he liked leading such a simple life—but she would have hated to have felt herself so far from the center of things and living by a time-table. Leota had chosen all of the apartments they had occupied in New York—they had moved four times and each time to a more expensive apartment—except the first one. She still remembered the dreadful things Will had picked for furnishings. She had got rid of those, years ago. They had had this apartment for nearly two years. She liked it as much as she could like any apartment they could afford, though Will thought even the rent for this one was rather high. There was an attractive view of the park from the windows and it was near things, shops and the theaters. And it wasn't impossible socially—as long as you stay below the hundreds you are safe enough. Even the furniture suited—odd things, painted with lots of terra cotta and purple and green, and black draperies.

Leota remembered the decorator who had done the apartment. He was a part owner of a decorating shop in Madison Avenue, but Leota felt that he had taken more than a financial interest in her and her home, even if his prices had been rather high. She had had tea with him a couple of times, while they were discussing furnishings, and she had felt dreadfully wicked about it. He had asked her to go to a little studio party but she had had to decline—Will

wouldn't have dreamed of allowing her to go out at night with another man and Will hadn't been included in the invitation—and, if he had been, that would have spoiled everything. How badly Will would have fitted in with anything like that!

Allan Frederickson was the decorator's name, a charming fellow, with graceful mannerisms. He had understood—about the cage. Why, he had said something about it at the time, Leota remembered now. They were choosing wall paper—the apartment had been papered before, so they couldn't have painted walls—and Frederickson had decided on a golden grass-cloth—and had said something about "gilded bars." It was hateful to think she had been caged like this—and that people knew. She would write a note to Frederickson or drop in to see him—to show him—she didn't care anything about him, of course—still, it would be interesting—

There were other men, too—Claron Wilmott, Laurance Haines, Dr. Stanton—others— She'd never been able to know any of them, really. Claron Wilmott had asked her, so often, to go places with him—of course she could never go. Wilmott was a bachelor—went with wonderful people—could do anything. And Laurance Haines—she had never known him very well, but whenever they met he would always say rather hard-to-understand things—he seemed mysterious, fascinating. He was married, too—but not caged the way she was. His wife was a faded little blonde with an inadequate turned-up nose, who dressed too girlishly. Of course she didn't understand him. Haines was a business man, but he had the soul of an artist and, just the year before, had exhibited half a dozen pastels at a private studio. He had explained to Leota about not being understood—now she could see him and talk to him.

And Dr. Stanton—why is it doctors seem peculiarly fascinating? Is it because you can tell them so much, because they seem to understand every-

thing, life, so thoroughly? Leota was a bit afraid of Dr. Stanton. He was quite rich and his patients represented "real society." Leota was flattered because he noticed her at all, yet, whenever she saw him, in a crowd, any place, he would stop, bend close, whisper a few words to her, squeezed her hand for an instant. Oh, there were so many worth while men who did things—and here she had been wasting her life, doing petty nothings, living stupid days—with Will. She had a chance, now—

All other women weren't caged, though most of them were. Some were free—like Roberta Miller. How Roberta must look down on her and laugh. She didn't blame Roberta, either. Roberta had come from Westmont, too, and they had had such good times, together, there. She had expected to see a lot of her in New York. But day times Roberta was busy. Leota never quite understood what she did, but it had something to do with chemistry and analyzing things. It seemed dreadfully stupid, but Roberta was always an odd one for things like that. All day Roberta was in a terrible looking office, wearing a stained apron and cooking things in glass tubes—Leota had run in there, once, to take her to luncheon. Leota couldn't see much of Roberta at night. Occasionally she came out to dinner, but she and Will never had anything to talk about. Leota could see how uncomfortable they both were and how Roberta disapproved of all of Leota's middle-class things.

Roberta had a studio all to herself, a big room with a fireplace and a tiny bed-room and a wee kitchenette behind a screen. There she could have all the company she wanted, artists and writers and people who Thought. Roberta got a big salary and wore odd clothes and talked about the Independence of Women. But, most wonderful of all, Roberta had a Past. There had been a Man and Roberta wasn't married to him! Roberta scorned marriage as a humiliating and unnecessary experience, called a wedding ring "the sign of bondage," said all married people hated

each other—and read things out of books to prove it. And Leota felt, when she saw what a bore Will was and what a wonderful life Roberta led, that perhaps there was a lot to Roberta's theory. No wonder Roberta wasn't at home in Leota's up-town apartment. Leota understood perfectly—Roberta thought her a slave, more than likely. And wasn't she—?

Of course, some things were rather pleasant. Freda was a good cook—even Will had to admit she was the best cook they had ever had—Leota did love good things to eat. And Katie knew how to wait on the table nicely and keep things in order—not bad looking either, quiet and quick. And Mrs. Brackett was good, too, always got through all of the washing and ironing and cleaning on Monday and Tuesday. It was really very comfortable, that way. Will didn't complain much about bills. He put Leota's money in the bank every month and increased it when she complained a great deal about the cost of things. Why shouldn't he? His salary was good. Leota felt that she did without clothes and dozens of other things that she wanted, and she was a good manager, careful, and did some of the ordering, herself, stopping at the market on her way down town, lots of times—and she wasn't extravagant. Other women—why she and Will didn't even have a car—!

Leota didn't care about that. She had no interest in driving and felt you don't get much satisfaction out of a car, always out of commission or the chauffeur leaving. Will's arrangement was really quite sensible—some sort of a monthly thing—you telephoned and the garage sent out a fairly nice looking car and a good chauffeur, usually, and you didn't have to bother about tires or things like that. It wasn't a car or thinking a lot before ordering a new frock—it was big things—living, being free—

CHAPTER IV

LEOTA closed the trunk. She'd leave it unlocked, in case Will thought of

something else when he came home.

She went into her own room, glanced at the pale green enameled clock on her green painted chest of drawers. It was time to dress. Will would be home and they were going out to dinner—as they did several times a week, and then to the theater—and in the morning Will was to sail.

Leota slipped out of her clothes, took a hasty shower and dressed slowly, calling Katie to get together the things she needed, fresh lingerie, her suit and hat. Katie wasn't as good as a personal maid, of course, but she was quick and handy and it annoyed Leota to hunt for the things she needed. She liked doing her own nails and hair—she could take a long time over them—but she liked, too, to find her clothes spread out, neatly, on the bed, waiting for her. Leota felt that Katie didn't work as hard as most maids—lots of time off. She'd had Katie for three years—oh, Katie knew a good job when she found one.

Leota adjusted her dress, looked at herself critically in the long mirror of her closet door. She really wasn't bad looking, she felt—and didn't look her age, nearly. Her type was fortunate—some women do have such a hard time of it. Leota was just a trifle over medium height and looked slimmer than she was, with plump arms and neck and a slender waist. She had rather small feet, but her hands were fairly large and her wrists and ankles a trifle thick, though not noticeably out of proportion. Her face was oval and usually pale, though she added a little color. Her eyebrows were nicely curved and she kept them slender and dark. Her eyes were rather a light brown, of a good size, and when she darkened the lids and corners were quite attractive and brilliant. Her hair was a smooth brown and she wore it rather tight, which made her head look nicely proportioned and small. Her nose was slender and slightly arched, her nostrils a bit long and narrow. Leota's mouth was rather full, especially her lower lip and in repose it turned down slightly at the corners. She always kept it very red.

There were slight traceries of lines around her eyes and mouth and her skin was soft and smooth.

Looking in the mirror strengthened Leota's opinions—all her charm was wasted. Will liked her because he could show her off—his wife. What did he know of her—how attractive she was, how different from other women—this wife he had caged for nine years? Well, now the cage was going to be open—

Will came home at a quarter past six. A business conference had detained him for a few minutes. It was April, but the day had turned unusually warm and he was perspiring. He was a pleasant looking man, fairly tall, with square shoulders and rather a square shaped head. In his late thirties, his brown hair was still crisp and black, his moustache close-cropped but strong. Even after shaving, his beard showed dark—he always gave the appearance of being well-fed, well-groomed, hairy. His skin was unexpectedly fair and he usually had a little color around his rather prominent cheek-bones. The backs of his hands were hair-covered to the knuckles and his hands were big, capable-looking, rather white, with thick, square fingers.

He let himself into the apartment with his key, looked into the living room for his wife, then went to the door of her bed-room.

"Leota," he called, pleasantly.

Leota, dressed in sleek black satin, opened the door for him and gave him a hearty kiss.

"Hello, how's everything?" she asked, "All ready to go? My but I'm going to miss you," and she didn't feel deceitful as she said it. She was really fond of Will, in a way—Will was good. Of course she'd miss him—how can you help missing anyone you've seen every day for nine years?

"All ready."

Will took off his light overcoat and his hat and laid them on his wife's bed, wiped off his face with his handkerchief.

"Getting awfully warm. Walked fast

from the subway so you wouldn't worry about my being late. Had to stay to see Cushing about some reports. Got everything ready now. Trunk packed? They'll call for it tonight. You'd better tell Katie."

"It's in your room. I think I've put everything in."

"Sure you have, sure it's fine."

He patted her on the shoulder.

Leota moved away slightly and shrugged. Will was so warm, heavy.

He examined the contents at the top of the trunk, added a packet of papers, called "Thanks, thanks, this is fine," as he closed it.

Leota put on her hat, seated at her green dressing table. It was rather a large, flat hat, of thin black material, with a small glittering ornament in front. She wore it far over her face and tilted a bit to the right and she carried her head rather high. Leota liked large, flat hats and wore them nearly always. She usually carried, too, the collection of little glittering toilet things she picked up now—a small silver puff box, a lip stick in a chased silver case, a pencil that could do double duty for eyebrows or shopping notes.

Will telephoned to the garage he patronized for a car. Leota didn't mind the subway or the busses or even surface cars in the daytime, but she did object to them after dark or when she was with Will or when she had on nice clothes. While they waited, she strummed on the upright piano that stood in the small music room which opened its double French doors into the living room and where stood, too, a small bookcase, half full of books and magazines. Leota played a popular piece, rather poorly, by note, humming unevenly, while Will jotted down some things on paper. Will didn't like the way Leota played or sang. Sometimes he said so. Tonight the occasion was rather a momentous one, so he said nothing.

They talked little as they rode to the restaurant, Leota asking several times how Will felt and did he think he'd be seasick and saying how she, herself,

would dread an ocean trip. They had been to Porto Rico several years before and Leota had spent several dreadful days of seasickness. She told Will to be especially careful about his health and to put on the heavier underwear if the weather grew colder. Visibly touched by her interest, Will told her not to bother about him, he'd be all right, he'd take good care of himself. He told boring business details about what Crowell and Cushing had said.

They went to a restaurant where they frequently dined, which, in their set, was noted for its food and service. An orchestra was playing. The lights and the gilt decorations were a bit gaudy, but the small tables were nearly all occupied.

As they entered, it came to Leota again that she never had liked the way Will entered restaurants. There was never enough force or personality about him. He entered meekly, as if afraid, and then stood, undetermined, until a head waiter rescued him. Even then, he followed mildly, accepting the designated table. Some men, Leota noticed, entered restaurants as if they owned them, sweeping the menials aside, securing the most desirable tables. She felt that with her looks and personality she deserved a man who had spirit, forcefulness, who appeared to be a man of importance, who knew how to press a bill, skillfully, into the hand of a head waiter.

The evening progressed as evenings usually did when Leota and Will dined out. It was better than dining at home, alone, anyhow—at home, after a too-heavy dinner, during which Leota tried to make the conversation interesting and never succeeded in raising it above the heaviest commonplaces, silences broken only by the sounds of the clinking of knife against plate, ice against glass, then several hours of reading, of picking up and putting down various newspapers, magazines and books. Finally, one or both of them would fall asleep. Will in the big, black velour-covered fireside chair, Leota stretched on the terra-cotta-colored

damask couch, clad in a becoming tea-gown, satin-slipped, in case anyone should happen in. Usually Will said, "Might as well go to bed," and a half hour of splashing in the bath-tub would follow, while Leota rubbed cold cream into her skin, always stroking carefully upward—she thought it would make her look younger—then vaselined her eyebrows and eyelashes. Leota and Will had separate bedrooms, but they shared the same bath, although a guest room, with its adjoining bath, lay farther down the hall and was seldom used, for they had few house-guests. Leota knew, too, that dining alone with Will was just about as much fun as if some of their friends were with them—there were always the same people, the same uninspiring, stupid chatter.

Now, in the restaurant, Will had to order dinner, a task spared him at home. Leota disliked Will's method of ordering. He picked up the card and studied it carefully, as if he had never seen one before, paying a due amount of attention to the prices. He leaned toward the waiter and asked such questions as "How is this?" and "Is the roast lamb good tonight?" The usual, "Very good, sir," even after a score of years, seemed to Will considerate and satisfactory, and he usually ordered the food he inquired about.

Leota knew that there were men who knew how to order a dinner, who didn't need cards at all, who gave directions to waiters and paid attention when platters were held before them—oh, not men who mixed their own salads at the table and knew but one salad dressing, but real men, to whom good dining was important. Well, soon she'd find men like that—

CHAPTER V

WILL chose the dinner slowly, ponderously, even pointing to an item with a thick, white finger.

The food was good and Leota had a large appetite, as usual. She and Will spoke very little, and save that they talked of Will's trip it might have been

any one of a hundred dinners they had had together. After dinner Will looked over his check carefully and gave the waiter a moderate and usual tip. He stood by while the waiter held Leota's coat for her. Leota remembered Jeddy, how he always took her coat from the waiter and said, very low to her, "I don't want anyone else this near my girl."

Will didn't know things like that. Jeddy—was he still dear, gentle? Now, why now—she could see Jeddy again—

They went to a musical comedy, the kind Will liked best—two comedians. The wit of one consisted of mispronounced words, that of the other of odd costumes and falls. There were also a dear little ingénue, who could dance but not sing; a dear little juvenile, who could neither sing nor dance, but who knew how to toss back his hair—the two sang dear little songs that were already popular on the Victrola—a chorus of eighteen, mouths too large, eyes too much made up, curls, scenery in splashes of green and orange, by a new scenic artist who had just discovered the real art in scenic production—the usual musical comedy, called, in this instance, "I'll Say It Is."

After the theater they went for a bite to eat at one of the more glittering roof gardens. This was an expensive treat, a fitting farewell for Will. Here they watched the same two comedians they had seen in "I'll Say It Is," two dancers whom they had seen in another musical comedy the week before and well-known chorus girls who managed to get their faces and names into every Sunday supplement and many scandals. There were souvenirs of balloons painted to represent ears of corn for the song, "Corn Husking Time," candy "kisses" for "One Kiss More" and tops and marbles for the "We're Boys and Girls Again" number. These, thrown by the chorus girls, were worth a couple of cents each and Leota was amused, as always, to observe Will's evident eagerness to secure these souvenirs or a smile from the girls who approached their table. This time the

stage was red and purple, the work of a just-discovered scenic painter, one Monsieur Leopold, who knew the last word in stage art. Leota liked to watch the audience—she felt she was clever at character reading and could tell which people were New Yorkers and which from out-of-town. She liked to make up little stories about them, to pick out those she thought she recognized from published photographs or whom she felt were rich and prominent—whom she wished she knew.

They got home shortly after one. The trunk had been called for. They undressed hurriedly, for Will wanted "a good night's sleep," though he had nothing to do but rest on the trip across.

Katie knocked on Leota's door, as usual, in the morning. It was raining and a cold wind came in the open window. Leota heard Will moving around, so, slipping into a rose negligée, she went into his room.

"You won't mind if I don't go down with you?" she asked. "I did want to see you off, but it's a dreadful day and I'm so afraid of getting another cold."

"Of course I wouldn't hear of you going." Will, already bathed, was buttoning his shirt. "Don't think of it. Go back to bed. Might as well take it easy while I'm away."

Of course she wouldn't think of going back to bed—the idea—Will's last morning here! She washed hurriedly and joined him in the dining-room.

The breakfast passed, as their breakfasts always passed, Will munching heartily as he read his *Times*, Leota glancing at the *Herald* carelessly, eating a bit of toast. She never had much appetite at breakfast, thought the whole thing a bore, but came to the table because it was one of the "wifely" little things Will liked.

Will, as usual, glanced at his watch two or three times during the meal. He got up finally, taking his paper with him and in the hall stuffed it into his overcoat pocket.

Leota was rather touched at his leaving. After all, crossing the ocean is always dangerous—six weeks is a long

time, anything might happen. She put her arms around him, the silk sleeves of her dressing-gown falling back. She happened to glance at her arm, smooth and white, a bit of the flesh-colored crepe de chine of her dressing gown against it—Will didn't appreciate her, he never even noticed—

Will kissed her heartily, unconsciously wiping off his mustache on the back of his hand.

"There, there," he said. "Be a good girl while I'm gone. Try not to get lonesome. I'll be back as soon as I can. Good-bye."

The door closed. She was alone, free!

CHAPTER VI

LEOTA spent the morning much as she spent her other unengaged mornings, wasting time with pleasant musings. But there was a feeling of elation, of abandon that she had never experienced before. She loved it. She stretched out her arms, pleasantly, as she stood at the window. Even the rain didn't bother her—what was one lost day with six weeks of freedom! It would be splendid not to have to dress. Even the days she didn't go out Leota felt she must be dressed when Will came home. During the day, too, she usually tried to look presentable, in case someone "happened in." She never knew who the someone might be—she had few unexpected callers—but she liked, always, to anticipate surprise.

Leota bathed slowly, using very warm water, and then spent an hour over her toilet, paying especial attention to the ovals of her nails, her eyebrows, going close to the window and pulling out a stray hair or two, using miniature tweezers. She put on her best dressing-gown, of orchid meteor, trimmed with bands of white swansdown. She always kept it in the closet with her evening things, carefully swathed in white. It had long, loose sleeves, weighed down with big tassels. Leota wanted an Italian house-gown of blue velvet, trimmed with dull gold, but she could never af-

ford it, and, though she felt it was made for her—little fat women can't wear those things—spending a couple of hundred dollars on a gown no one would ever see—but Will—was not Leota's idea of luxury.

She telephoned to her favorite confectioner and ordered, to be sent out at once, a five-pound box of expensive chocolates with rich cream centers, of which she was especially fond. She lay on the couch, then, and read a novel she had started the day before, musing pleasantly between paragraphs.

She ate a salad for luncheon, and, when the candy was delivered in the afternoon, ate over a pound of it.

Late in the afternoon she telephoned to Aline Buell, one of her best friends, gossiping for half an hour.

It was splendid—being alone—not having to invent conversation at dinner—being able to do what she really wanted—

At six, unconsciously, she found herself glancing at the clock and wondering when Will would be home. How stupid—that's what habit had done for her! A little, watching wife! She'd get over that in a day or two!

Dinner seemed rather a lonely meal. Will always brought home tales of the office, of the outside world, stupid things, but alive with commercialism, activity. Dinner was good, though. Leota had told Freda to prepare a number of dishes Will didn't like, a salad with a rich Russian dressing, fruit pudding with a heavy, thick cream sauce.

After dinner was pleasant enough. Leota trailed the orchid dressing gown into the living room—she liked the effect of it against the terra-cotta colored rug and the black draperies. She played in her usual uncertain way, and sang some sentimental things she remembered from her girlhood, "Spring Rain," "The Gypsy Trail" and a song that started "Sometimes between long shadows on the grass," the name of which she had forgotten. It wasn't too late—at thirty-two—for love and life—

Leota woke up late the next morning and had Katie bring her breakfast to

her bed. Leota didn't really enjoy eating in bed, for she liked to bathe before she ate—and, after a bath, what's the use of getting back into bed again? Besides, her tray was too small to hold the needed breakfast things and tilted easily. It was of wicker, with a glass top, and had pockets for mail at either side—one of Will's attempts to buy her a luxury. Leota munched toast contentedly enough, though, for eating in bed represented a triumph of doing what she wanted to.

She was sorry there wasn't more mail. Reading letters in bed seemed so much a part of the luxury of breakfasting there. There was a note from the chairman of the publicity committee of the bazaar appointing Thursday as the day for a meeting, a luncheon invitation from Irene Sears for the following Wednesday "to meet Mrs. Updyke." She didn't like Mrs. Sears, she had never heard of Mrs. Updyke, she was tired of women, anyhow!

She got up about eleven. The weather was clearing. At her desk she wrote several notes in her large, vertical, angular writing on her light tan paper with "L F C" in an elongated monogram in green—she had always regretted that neither her family nor Will's had a coat-of-arms. Only fear of committing some error kept her from appropriating one.

The notes were necessary ones—to out-of-town relatives, mostly. Then she took the first step in leaving the cage—she wrote to Claron Wilmott! Of course Wilmott was a bachelor and popular—he received many invitations. Still, hers— She wrote that Will had gone to England and asked him "to help cheer her up" during his absence, unconsciously lapsing into the intense phraseology of her girlhood. During her married life her notes had been stilted, conventional, as if Will were looking over her shoulder. She often asked him to read the letters she had written, "to see if they would do," and Will disliked all written expressions of emotion. She wrote, then, to a young chap she knew, Howard Denning. She

had met him at dinners, during the last few years, and he had, well, made love to her—in public and quite discreetly, of course, little nods and smiles and flatteries. It might be pleasant to see him.

Then—why not? She could write to Jeddy if she wanted to. She tore up half a dozen sheets of paper, getting the letter started. Then she remembered she had seen his name in a newspaper just a few days before. She wrote, finally:

Wednesday.

Dear Jeddy:

Only yesterday your name flashed to me in one of the newspapers. You knew I was here in New York? Won't you drop in to tea, one day soon, to take up some of the broken threads in a friendship that has always remained very dear to me?

*As always,
Leota French Clifford.*

She hoped it sounded cryptic, alluring.

She telephoned then to Laurence Haines, at his office. It didn't seem right, sending a note to a married man. Why, he might even show it to his wife and she would laugh at it—Leota knew how women were.

Leota was quite nervous when she heard Haines' voice over the telephone. She felt as if she were doing a devilish, unheard-of thing.

Haines seemed quite pleasant, undisturbed. So, Will Clifford was in England! Indeed, he would come and cheer her up—never had a more pleasant task been assigned to him. What about going to dinner with him, instead? He was lonesome, too. Yes, Mrs. Haines was visiting her mother. How nicely the two departures fitted in! This was Wednesday—how about Friday night? Fine—he'd call a little before seven.

She had a dinner engagement—with a married man! The cage door had opened. This was freedom, indeed!

In the afternoon, Leota had an engagement with Mrs. Hill, a pretty little blonde whom she had known for sev-

eral years. They spent a couple of hours shopping and then went to an exhibition of etchings Mrs. Hill had heard discussed. Leota didn't "see much in them," but tried to talk about etchings as she looked at them. It was a usual afternoon, but the thought that she didn't have to be home to dinner in time—or at all—that anything might happen—the engagement she had made, the notes she had written—made it all seem wonderfully pleasant.

Mrs. Hill persuaded Leota to come home with her to dinner—no use eating alone. No, there wouldn't be any other company, just she and Jack. The children could eat with the family, too.

Leota liked children only occasionally, they were so messy and tugged so at one's clothes—she never knew what to say or do to them, but Billie and Margaret Hill were plump and blond and pleasant. It wasn't exciting, but there was nothing else to do just then. She telephoned Katie to tell Freda not to prepare dinner for her.

Leota got home at ten. Jack Hill took her home, and even this slight deviation from the other dinners at the Hills', when she and Will had gone home together, was pleasant. Leota found herself smiling, personally, at Jack, as if he were a real man, not just a husband. When his wife wasn't along he was quite a jolly, talkative fellow. Of course he was too conventional—satisfied with living as he did—the way Will did—coming home to dinner every day. That wasn't life.

The next afternoon Leota went to the charity bazaar committee meeting. She got up late, spent several hours of the morning over her toilet and the meeting was tiresome, lasted the whole afternoon. She brought Virginia Allen home to dinner with her.

Will didn't like Mrs. Allen. He thought she talked too much and disapproved of her actions and because she was divorced—the divorce having been accompanied by publicity not at all favorable to Mrs. Allen. Leota always wished she knew her better—had felt

that this big woman who laughed at public opinion and still kept her own position must really be worth knowing, charming, if you got beneath the surface.

So, at dinner, Leota tried to show to Mrs. Allen how fully in sympathy she was, how dissatisfied she, too, was with the conventional, humdrum life she had to lead—that she, too, longed for freedom.

But Mrs. Allen refused to open her soul. Even after dinner, as they drank their coffee in the gold-colored light of the living-room, Mrs. Allen refused to accept Leota as one of the free, refused to give more than correct, conventional platitudes about life.

Finally, Leota learned the truth. Virginia Allen had had a change of heart. She was no longer a defier of convention. On the contrary, she was planning a series of conventional acts and entertainments which would take her back into the graces of the disapproving. She was to wed a certain Mr. Montrose, it seemed, and, as Mrs. Montrose, she hoped to occupy an important and secure position in society. She had accepted Leota's invitation to dinner because Leota represented conventionality. Now she was almost afraid of Leota's ideas. Her conversation was heavily correct, stolidly domestic. Leota was dreadfully bored.

CHAPTER VII

ON Friday mornings, Leota attended a series of musicales at one of the larger hotels. These were conducted by a tall, meager-looking woman, who spent an hour of each morning talking on a musical topic, referring frequently to her notes, hesitating, repeating. After the lecture singers or pianists would give selections from the composer or opera under discussion. Leota felt that it was a nice thing to attend—she was able to keep up with things, have a real understanding of music—meet really nice people, too. This Friday she dressed languidly. At first she couldn't decide to go at all. Still, there was

nothing else to do. She chatted pleasantly with Katie as she dressed.

Just before she left and sooner than she had dared expect them, the postman brought two letters. She opened them nervously. Claron Wilmott and Howard Denning had both written to her—Wilmott asked to be allowed to call the coming Monday evening, Denning assured her of the pleasure the note had brought him and said he would drop in to tea in the near future. Notes from two men and a dinner this very evening with a third! Leota tossed her head in a spirit of deviltry and added a bit more rouge to her lips. This was living! Perhaps, even, something would happen this morning—a musician who was to play might be famous and handsome—might find her eyes in the crowd, ask to meet her—

The lecture was on old English ballads. They were sung by a group of fat women who looked just alike, with red faces and quivering chins.

Leota had luncheon at Mary Elizabeth's with Mrs. Buell, who also attended the musicales. She hurried home, rather early, to prepare for the dinner engagement.

At home she undressed rapidly and tried to take a nap, so she would look fresh and rested, but she couldn't go to sleep. She lay on her green enameled bed, musing of this evening, of other evenings, of things she might do. Of course she really wouldn't be—exactly untrue to Will—that wouldn't be fair—still, there were thousands of things—she could have delightful times—the whole world lay before her to be unfolded—

She took a long slow bath, adding unusual quantities of her favorite toilet water, lathering herself unnecessarily with the oriental scented bath soap she always used. She dried herself slowly, examining her smooth skin, fixed her nails, massaged, powdered, darkened her lashes and brows, reddened her lips and cheeks, spent half an hour brushing her hair, admiring her face, front view and profile, in the mirrors of her dressing table.

She put on one of her favorite gowns, black and green shimmering satin, cut rather low, and very plain. She was dressed half an hour too soon and spent the time at the piano.

Katie answered the door. Leota stood, quietly, near the piano, as Haines entered. She knew the gold of the grass-cloth made a good background for her.

"This is good of you," Haines said, quite low, as he came toward her. He took her hand and held it unnecessarily long. How lonely he had been!—how she had saved his life! His wife hadn't been well and now she had gone away for her health and no one would take pity on him and then he had received the charming little note—

Leota was quite thrilled. This was wicked—forbidden—to entertain, all alone, a married man, go to dinner with him—

"We'd better go out and eat," said Haines. "I'm hungry as a bear."

The expression somewhat shocked Leota. It was one Will used frequently and she had always disliked it, so commonplace. Surely Haines could have been more interested in her—still, it was dinner time—men were alike when they were hungry.

She put on her hat and coat and they went down in the elevator. She had thought that of course Haines would have a car, but there was none waiting. She hesitated just a moment at the door but he took her arm, which annoyed Leota, though she liked to dream of someone holding her arm, very closely, late at night. Haines led Leota to the nearby subway entrance. He neither apologized nor explained—evidently he thought it quite all right. She couldn't tell him that she hated subways, except occasionally in the day time, that she never rode in them with Will. There were no seats. She had to stand, people pressing against her, hardly able to keep on her feet, and she had worn thin satin evening slippers.

They got off at Times Square. Haines mentioned a restaurant he had decided on, as if, in choosing it, he had

shown marked originality. Leota did not raise an objection to his choice. The restaurant was one of Will's favorites, where she and Will had dined the last night Will was home.

In the restaurant Haines waited, hesitatingly, until the waiter piloted him to a seat. He let the waiter take care of Leota's coat. Then, when they were seated, he fumbled, hesitated over the menu just as Will would have done. Leota wanted to grab the card out of his hand, shake him. What was the use?

She looked at Haines critically as he ordered, as he consulted the waiter and found that "the filet of sole is very good tonight, sir," while he consulted her in regard to vegetables, ignoring a salad, pointing a red finger at an especially interesting item.

Why, Haines wasn't as good looking nor as distinguished as Will, even. Of course he was probably more fascinating, always taking women out to dinners, being misunderstood, all that. But his face was unpleasantly big and shiny and red and he wasn't "finished" about things any more than Will was.

Will would have ordered just the same dinner, plus the missing salad—Leota loved salads. The music was the same.

"What are they playing? It sounds familiar, but I don't seem to remember the name of it," Haines asked. Will would have asked that, too.

But the dinner was good. Leota ate heartily.

Haines began to talk about himself, his artistic ambitions, his wife. — His wife—didn't understand. They had been childhood sweethearts, grew up together. He had gone away to school, then into the world, changed, grown. She had remained the same, a nice little small-town girl. He had seen how things were, but she hadn't. He had been in honor bound—what could he do? So he had married her and they had drifted farther and farther apart. He was forced to keep in the rut of commercial things because his wife was extravagant—she used all he could pro-

duce, but his soul called out for other things. His art—that was what counted, that and his friends—at least he was allowed those—and nod—Mrs. Clifford.

His voice grew tender, low.

Leota had expected to be thrilled by Haines. She had heard other women describe him as fascinating. She felt that the things he was saying should have thrilled her. They left her curiously cold. She felt a sympathy for Mrs. Haines, such an indefinite, mouse-like little thing, always pleasant and smiling. Why, she knew Mrs. Haines wasn't extravagant; she wore cheap ready-made frocks Leota wouldn't have worn. Being left at home while your husband talked about art and took other women out to dinner—she was out of town, now, but Haines took other women places even when she wasn't. Of course Will was a dreadful bore, but, if he did such things—

Haines tipped the waiter rather a smallish amount, Leota noticed, and he let the waiter adjust her coat.

Haines had tickets for the theater—a musical comedy that Leota had not seen. It resembled dozens she had seen in every single particular. The *pièce de résistance* of this particular opera was a song, "Cat, Cat, Cat," eight members of the chorus carrying live kittens. Haines thought this number "great" and hummed the music between the acts.

After the theater, Haines suggested, with a great show of inspiration, that they go to a well-known roof garden, similar to the one Will and Leota had attended on Monday. Leota had been there frequently, but she had not seen the newest *revue*. She liked roof-gardens, the color, the people, the smell of food and drink, tobacco and perfume. She had hoped that someone would see her and notice that she was not with her husband, but it seemed to her that Haines was rather afraid of recognition. He asked, rather nervously, "Is that tall fellow John Fredericks?" Was it possible, in spite of his talk about his rights, that Haines

was afraid of gossip and Mrs. Haines?

Haines was interested in the performance and, when the chorus girls, dressed as drummer boys, gave miniature drums to a favored few, he did all he could to attract attention to himself. He had to content himself with a pair of drumsticks and spent the rest of the evening keeping time by banging them on the table or applauding with them. Will couldn't have behaved more fatuously.

Leota noticed, too, that, as Haines drank, he moved closer to her and she had to grab her hand away to keep him from holding it under the table. He grew even more confidential, telling her how fine she was, how he knew she was misunderstood, what a shame it was that wives and husbands made such mistakes when they chose their mates. "Fate—that's what it is—fate. Deed is done. You can't undo it—circumstances—you just got to suffer, suffer, suffer, in silence—in silence."

In the taxi on the way home, Haines sat very close to Leota and told her what a wonderful little woman she was. If he had not used the phrase "wonderful little woman" Leota might have liked his praises better. It was the phrase that fell easiest from Will's lips when he wanted to say something nice. Haines was not even as clever as Will. Why, Haines was not even sincere.

Leota had a key with her—it had seemed so foolish to disturb Katie or Freda. Besides—she had hoped to be in a mood where Katie would have been an intrusion.

Haines opened the door and went with Leota into the private hallway of the apartment. Almost before she was aware of it he had put his arms around her and was kissing her. Leota felt his moist, fat cheek, his thick lips. She pulled away rather ungracefully.

"What do you mean?" she said, "what do you mean?" The phrases sounded stupid, meaningless enough. She couldn't think of anything else. Did he think because she had allowed him to take her to dinner—to the theater—

"No harm meant," Haines said. "Thought you were a good fellow, understand me. You wrote me a note, didn't you, asking me to cheer you up and all? And now you get sore. Remind me of my wife. You never can tell what will please a woman."

He stood there entirely unabashed, a bit puzzled by Leota's actions, but quite sure that his course had been the usual, expected one. He'd taken her to dinner, hadn't he? Spent money for food and the theater and a roof show—not to mention a taxi home. And now, because he tried to kiss her—

He straightened up with an attempt at dignity and said a stiff good-bye.

CHAPTER VIII

LEOTA cried herself to sleep. That stupid fellow, Haines! If Will had been here—he'd have told him a few things. Haines, with a dear little wife, acting that way the first time he was alone with another woman! And the things he'd said about his wife—awfully disloyal! At least, no matter what she thought, she never said things like that about Will. Such a stupid evening—might as well—or better—have been spent with Will. Of course, it was because Haines was married. She was through with married men. They were probably all alike. But, imagine Haines taking her out—one evening—and wanting kisses in payment. Still, there were other men—a world full of them.

The next morning Leota went down town. While she was buying some gloves at Altman's, she remembered that just a few blocks away was Allan Frederickson's decorating shop. She'd go in and see him, just a little chat. He'd suggested, so often, that she drop in, go places with him. Frederickson was a dear, a gentleman.

Frederickson and Oakley's "Shop of The Periods" was in Madison Avenue. It occupied the third and fourth stories of an old brownstone front house. Down stairs, a well-known corsetière held forth, her pink offerings flirting

with the Italian colors displayed in the upper windows.

Leota ran up the narrow stairs. A girl, with severely parted hair, wearing a purple and orange batik smock, received her, telling her Frederickson would be in soon. She spent the time, after looking into a mirror to be sure her hair and face were smoothly presentable, examining the furniture that stood around, highly colored reproductions, mostly of French and Italian things. She turned as she heard Frederickson's voice.

"This is a real treat, I assure you. And what can I do for you, my dear Mrs. Clifford?"

Frederickson had been born in Iowa, but his affected, high voice and his extreme English accent gave no clew to his native state. He walked with a bit of a spring and was always gesturing with long, slender fingers. He had a real love and understanding of beautiful things, of color, a "feel" for antiques, but this was overshadowed by a commercialism and shoppiness that were always in sight when there was any chance to make money. He was quite a snob, too, and liked the intimacies with "the best people" that his trade afforded him. He delighted in talking about various society leaders he had met and of having teas and dinners with them, but he was not above any friendship that could help his decorating shop. His intimate friends were usually decorators and artists and he preferred those who were rising, who might help him.

Leota shook hands with him.

"I was so bored and I remembered what fascinating things you always have here so I thought I'd run in and see you."

"I'm awful glad you did. Have you seen this dear little chair? You'll love it. The little enameled knobs go wonderfully with your rug, don't they? How is your home? You do care for it as much as ever?"

Leota said that the apartment was still satisfactory, that she'd think about the chair. Then.

"Why don't you come in some day for tea and see for yourself?"

"I'd love that. May I really come? You've always been such an inaccessible person. I remember you refused to go to a real tea party with me."

"That was different. Mr. Clifford was home. You see, he's in England now on business and I—"

"Then you could go with me now?"

"It would be awfully nice."

Leota, when, with Frederickson, adapted his speech, his rising inflections, supercilious expressions, English accent. Now, her "awfully nice" was as artificially toned as Frederickson's own speeches.

A tea, it seemed, was to be given by Hartwell Miles in his studio in Gramercy Park. Miles was a sculptor and had just finished a head of Frederick J. Ray, the Western banker. The tea was to exhibit the head and Mr. and Mrs. Ray were to be there and perhaps a dozen other wealthy patrons of the arts, whom Miles had his eyes on. But there would be some real people there, too, not the fakers or half-starved failures of the Village, but real artists, successes, another decorator or two, a painter who'd just returned from France, a well-known poet who had just published his third volume of verse and was nearly making expenses.

Leota listened interestedly. It was just what she wanted—to meet people who were really doing things. Of course she'd go. Tomorrow at four, then—

She left the shop and hurried home, though there was no reason for hurrying. Tomorrow a tea with Frederickson, on Monday Claron Wilmott was coming to call—a wonderful time—a real deliverance from boredom, convention.

But now it was Saturday and Leota felt that there ought to be something special to do. She knew it was awfully middle-class, parties on Saturday night, but when Will was home there was always something—he could sleep late on Sunday, so he liked to go out Saturday nights—usually two or three couples

went to the theater with supper afterwards. Of course that was stupid—still, it was something. Now no one invited Leota to go any place. She rang up half a dozen of her women friends, to tell them that Will was away, to gossip, hoping they would include her in some pleasant party. No one did. Of course, after she got started there would be a lot of invitations—the people who mattered just didn't know that she was free.

There were places she could go alone—free people did that—it would be rather splendid going alone—not being tied to a stupid, masculine escort. In Greenwich Village you can go to a restaurant alone and all kinds of fascinating, famous people talk to you and you talk to them and everyone gets acquainted and smokes. Leota had heard all about that. She had gone to the Village but always in groups of four or six, "slumming" as her crowd expressed it. She knew that her group had always stamped itself at once with the terrible curse of being "uptowners." Still, everyone else, with the exception of a very occasional greasy, heavy eyebrowed man and short haired girl in a dirty smock, had stared and been well dressed, too. Well, after she found out about things, she would go alone to where artists and musicians and writers gathered, would mingle freely, hear clever, scintillating conversation, make genuine, unhampered friendships.

Leota telephoned to Roberta Miller. Roberta was so sorry, but she was just getting ready to fly to a Spring weekend house-party some friends were giving in a shack in New Jersey. If she'd only known a day sooner, she might have been able to include Leota! She was afraid it was rather impossible, now. Glad to hear Leota was free to go places, to breathe for herself. Monday? Oh, if Leota had an engagement—and she'd be busy Tuesday and Wednesday. What about Saturday—a week from today? Leota had better plan to stay all night—awful bother going home late, so far up town. They'd have dinner and then find something in-

teresting—always something going on, and then Leota could have breakfast with her on Sunday and maybe go some place Sunday, too. All right, around six, then, a week from tonight.

Leota wasted the rest of the day as she always wasted her time, reading a few pages of a book she had picked up down town—she had heard it had some exciting society scenes in it—playing the piano. She went for a short walk late in the afternoon, eyeing every man she passed with a new interest. She saw no one she knew nor who attracted her. She ate dinner alone. It was rather lonely. Of course, later—

She spent the evening as she spent the afternoon, restless, dissatisfied. She really didn't miss Will—it wasn't that—it was splendid being free. But things ought to happen. Jeddy hasn't answered her note. Of course it was quite possible he was out of town or the note had been delayed—she had sent it to the business address she had found in the telephone book. She hadn't heard from Denning again. It wasn't as if she had written to men who weren't interested in her. These men had been. If she only knew more men—the right kind. The rest of the men she knew were so stupid, heavy—worse than Will.

CHAPTER IX

FREDERICKSON called promptly at four, on Sunday. Leota had put on her most artistic afternoon gown, one she was sure he would admire. It was tan, with an embroidery of colored wools and wooden beads. Frederickson did like it and said so.

"You're quite exquisite that way. I see you are living up to the color-scheme I planned for you. You are quite perfect against that gold background. Women like you, with brown eyes and hair and fair skins, ought always to go in for green and gold and terra cotta. You still like the way I did your apartment?"

"Quite a lot."

"Awfully glad. It is good. This chair ought to go nearer the lamp, so—"

Frederickson rearranged a chair or two, tossed cushions about, patted one, decided that an embroidered affair was "impossible" and must be put away, immediately. His long, white fingers arranged the things on the table, the few books, the framed photograph.

"Did you see those new candlesticks when you were in, Saturday? I'm so sorry I didn't call your attention to them. You ought to have a pair with black candles in them, right here. Awful nice, polychromed, lovely colors. And some new book-ends to go with them. These are awful—hide them away at once—worse than Victorian."

They walked for half an hour, then climbed on a bus. The weather was fine, sunny, with a fresh, pleasant Spring breeze.

Leota liked Frederickson. She didn't know exactly what to say to him, he cared about so few things and she was afraid that her conversation would show her terrible lack of knowledge about decoration—she had read Frank Alvah Parsons and a couple of chapters in R. Davis Benn's "Style in Furniture," but had given it up when it got to be a little hard to understand. She could impress her friends with her knowledge but didn't know enough to talk with a real decorator. She listened attentively when Frederickson told of a home he was doing on Long Island, rather ordinary people, really, whom he had to fight with, before they'd let him use anything good.

Leota remembered, then, how difficult to talk with Frederickson had always been. Decoration seemed to be the only thing he knew or cared anything about. If you let him talk about his interests it was rather confusing and a dreadful bore, if you talked about what interested you he didn't seem to hear at all. Then, too, the knowledge came to Leota that there really wasn't anything she was interested in—or knew anything about. Even if there had been—

Her feet hurt. She had stumbled, Frederickson had taken such long steps. She knew she oughtn't to wear French heels for walking, but sensible shoes are

so terribly looking—she didn't know anything about Gothic Art of the fourteenth century—

Hartwell Miles' studio was on the top floor of what Frederickson called "a lovely old home" which had been "done over awfully well," a few years before, into studios and apartments. Miles' studio extended across the front of the house, with the living rooms in the rear. The studio was a big, high-ceilinged room, with an immense skylight across the front and part of the roof. The walls were painted a light putty color and there was a big fireplace, pleasantly ablaze, though the day did not especially call for it. But Leota knew the value artistic people put on fireplaces. The walls were nearly bare. On one side an artist had sketched a huge head in charcoal, on another side were several smaller things, done in color on the wall. There were a few framed things, too, bright landscapes done in oil. The furniture consisted of several couches, velvet covered, several Italian chairs, two of the favorite Dante model, and two hour-glass chairs. There was a rather handsome oriental rug in reds on the floor and a long Italian table stood near one wall. In the center of the room was a small stand bearing the bust of a man. Four smaller stands stood around the room. On a sixth stand was a group of odd-looking pottery, in reds and purples, with an uneven glaze.

Frederickson did not ring. He opened the door. The room seemed very full of people to Leota, though later she found there were not over twenty. As many more came in during the next half hour. Frederickson called, "I say, Miles," in a high, affected voice.

Their host came toward them. He was a slender little fellow with heavy reddish eyebrows and a soft looking, pointed light red beard. His hair was combed so it would stand out, around his head, and, as it was starting to recede the effect was that of an uneven halo.

Leota was introduced and was offered a slender, yielding hand.

"So glad you came," Miles said, graciously and called, softly, "Juliet."

Juliet was Mrs. Miles. She took long, swinging, slow steps toward her latest guests, whom she welcomed with a cordial drawl. She wore a trailing gown of blue-green chiffon which fell in straight lines from shoulder to hem. Leota noticed that it was badly torn and quite dirty around the bottom, but that Juliet never lifted it, even when it was being stepped on.

Leota left her coat in a tiny bedroom, which contained a lovely mahogany chest of drawers and, in a dark corner, a small table of golden oak—and Frederickson had taught Leota that to possess golden oak was almost a criminal offense. She powdered her nose and carefully puffed out her hair before going back into the studio.

Leota found her host, hostess and escort deep in conversation with a group near the fireside, so she joined them. They nodded but did not interrupt the rather pompous fat man who was talking. Leota was introduced to few people. She found that, if you had anything to say to anyone, you said it. She found, too, that it was quite unlikely she would have anything to say.

"Have you seen the head?" a greyish-looking man asked her.

"No, I haven't," said Leota.

The man led the way to the center of the room, as if to a great discovery. A group of people parted so they, too, might admire.

"There," said the greyish-looking man.

"The head" was the bust of a man of about sixty, a pouchy fellow, with small eyes and rather a sneer, a double-chinned person with neat hair."

"How do you like it?"

"It's awful nice," said Leota, in her best artistic manner.

"Wonderful," the man agreed. "He's caught so much—the spirit, the tone. Who other than Hartwell Miles could have taken a man like that, an ordinary looking Western banker, mind you, and show his soul, quivering, to the world.

A real unveiling—that's what it is. Miles can catch his butterflies."

"I—I like it a lot," said Leota.

The other heads received careful attention, too. Whether sold or not, Leota did not know, but they were of famous people, a dancer, a popular novelist, a composer, a statesman. The pottery was the work of Juliet Miles and praise of these pieces was extravagant. The glazes rivalled in color, it seemed, those on the tiles of the French sixteenth century.

Leota watched the people, interestedly. They were rather sharply divided, it seemed. Either they were artistic, in the way New Yorkers take to show temperament, or they seemed a bit floridly over-dressed. The other guests were introduced, almost formally, to the over-dressed ones. They were treated perhaps even a bit too graciously, but they seemed little at ease, even when quite proud and patronizing. Mr. Ray, the western banker, and his wife came, late in the afternoon and took their places, definitely, with the over-dressed ones. The artistic guests buzzed about them, praising the head and Miles' interpretative work, flattering, almost cooing. Leota talked to bejeweled matrons, to slim, bobbed-haired girls or slender, effeminate looking young men and soon got to the bottom of it. The over-dressed ones were the patrons of the arts, of course, and it was well to bend to them, to listen to all they said, to agree with them, to flatter their tastes, to bring sketches for their approval, to laugh at their witticisms, for, only in this way, would the patrons of the arts fulfill their missions as patrons.

The conversation was of art but the touches were light, deft. Art was beautiful, inspiring, a high point at which to aim, something to worship. Hartwell Miles' work was taken with great seriousness. Each head came in for half an hour's serious discussion and praise. Groups continually gathered about them. Each of the bits of pottery was praised separately. A rather tall man with long, oily hair, began to speak of his trip abroad, and

Leota knew as his voice grew loud, insistent, that it was planned that he should give an informal "talk." The others grew silent, as he told them that in America really the best, the new, the real art was to be found. The artists here were doing more to uplift real freedom of expression than those of any other nationality—we were the bud, the flower of the coming generation—and Miles was among the highest of these.

"In art, in literature, the older countries have had their day. We of the newer generation of America are triumphing. We are carrying the torch of freedom of expression in every medium. We of the newer generation are the renaissance. Few of the publications are open to us, yet even now we have the *New Republic*, the *Liberator*, the *Pagan*. Few of the art shops have broken away from the iron hands of tradition, of ugliness. Still, one at a time, the doors are opening, as doors must open to beauty, to truth, to newer thought, that we of the new generation are bringing."

A rather well-trained butler—Leota knew that he was hired for the occasion—brought in the tea things. There was an enormous tea, then, with hundreds of tiny sandwiches, filled with a variety of chopped fillings, rich little cakes, well-prepared drinks.

"I hope Miles got a lot for that head," thought Leota, "neither he nor his wife looks awfully prosperous."

The guests ate sparingly, nibbling daintily of the sandwiches, as they prattled nicely about art, about "their work," the artistic half of the crowd flattering, admiring, being gracious to the over-dressed half, who, in turn, a rather bewildered turn, asked questions concerning arts and artists, talked of themselves, their homes, their tastes, their business, their prosperity.

Then the guests started to go. Leota noticed that the "outsiders" made the first move. In less than fifteen minutes they were all gone, after many pretty adieux, hand shakings and compliments.

"Shall we go?" asked Leota of young Frederickson, who was seated on a couch in a corner, talking, with gestures, to a girl in black and gold.

"Oh, dear, no," said Frederickson. "I want you to know all of these charming people better."

Leota had felt rather bored, out of it. The "rich folks" had evidently guessed she was not artistic, the artistic folks must have known she wasn't rich. No one had paid much attention to her. Now she hoped things would be better.

To Leota it seemed as if these people had been acting in a play. Now the play was over, everyone suddenly relaxed, grew comfortable. The women all started to smoke, taking pillows from the couches and arranging themselves gracefully on the floor, near the fireplace.

Miles said something to Frederickson about Leota. Frederickson laughed his pleasantly affected, high laugh.

"Oh, Mrs. Clifford. Quite jolly. Husband's in England, so I told her I'd look out for her today. Known her for years. Did her apartment last year—oh, yes, up town, but all gold and black and dull red, quite nice."

"Pass the sandwiches, Gig," said a girl in orange to a lanky youth with a loose tie.

"I'm glad the affair passed off nicely," sighed Juliet Miles, as if she were all alone.

Everyone grabbed the sandwiches and ate rapidly. Leota was glad they were going to be eaten, but she did hope she could reach them before they were all gone. The butler had vanished. Leota secured quite a pile with shredded chicken in them, so she was quite satisfied. All seemed proud of their ability to "pig"—pig, as a verb, seemed a favorite word—so nobody noticed Leota.

The conversation, though still artistic, became more personal, shoppier. Miles had secured the Rays through Gig Morton, the tall boy, who, of course, had got a commission. If you brought a patron of the arts to an artist and the artist got an order, you received a commission. Miriam Young had

brought the Van Horns to the tea. They had bought three paintings from her, in less than a year, but were tired of paintings now, so she was "handing them over." The Greenes had had their country house done by young Burkley, a rival of Frederickson, and had been invited to the tea because they "loved to meet such artistic people" and because Mrs. Greene, if properly flattered, might find that a head by Hartwell Miles was the one thing needed to complete her home. If you were rich and met one artist member of the group—and took advice—you could have your home designed, the grounds chosen and planned, the home built and furnished, your portrait painted, your gowns made, all by the "newer artists" whom your first artistic friend was lucky enough to know and kind enough to introduce you to.

This amused Leota, but she was not entertained in the way she had expected to be. She was rather annoyed at being disillusioned. Although not rich enough to be a patron of the arts, she would have preferred worshipping.

On the whole, the conversation did not interest her. No one attempted to draw her into it. She could have said anything, if she had found space for it, but she didn't have anything to say. The conversation was about art, mostly about painting, sculpture, decoration, about statuettes, book-covers, old chests. Nothing was explained, defined. It was taken for granted that everyone knew about everything under discussion, just as, when the conversation became more personal, and a bit catty, it was taken for granted that everyone knew all of the little personal jokes and the people talked about. You could say anything you wanted to about a person, no matter how frank, it seemed, though you might be called "snooty"—another favorite word—when you got through. Those who had been nicest, when "company" was present, became cattiest, now. Though everyone wasn't catty. Gig had his arms around the girl in orange and held her cup, as she drank. Juliet Miles stroked the hair of young Burk-

ley, though he didn't seem to enjoy it a great deal, he had black, sleek hair. It was artistic enough, Leota admitted, though rather a bore, on the whole.

It was quite dark when the guests started to go, "to get some real food to eat," they admitted. Frederickson and Leota took a bus again. A cool wind had risen and it was no longer pleasant on top. Inside it smelled of petrol and made Leota slightly ill.

Back in her apartment, Leota suggested that Frederickson stay for supper and he accepted hastily. It was Freda's afternoon out, but Katie prepared an acceptable salad and there was some cold meat and a good cheese. Frederickson seemed to enjoy it.

During the meal it was easy enough to find things to talk about, the people they had seen during the afternoon, the theaters they had attended. These were the first of Frederickson's friends Leota had met, and, though he called them "charming," Leota was surprised at the little personal, cutting things—"snooty" things—he said about them, how they "lifted" customers, how little some of them knew about their work, things about their domestic life. After supper, the conversation dragged into silence. Leota found Frederickson rather shoppy. Now that he was not working on her apartment and could not talk about draperies and color, they had no bond. Leota knew and cared little about art and decoration, about Frederickson's commercial progress. He cared about little else. Leota brought out a big box of candy and they ate a lot of it. She tried playing on the piano, but Frederickson was not interested. At eleven he thought he had better go and Leota agreed with him. He shook hands, warmly, and said he would come in to dinner, soon.

Leota had had no idea that people could be so difficult to entertain. The reception had been interesting enough—but afterwards! Frederickson talked enough, if you encouraged him, but he said such conceited, uninteresting, boring things. Still, there were other men

—Wilmott for one—he was to call the next evening.

CHAPTER X

LEOTA spent Monday down town with Aline Buell and a friend of theirs, a Mrs. Rutherford. They had luncheon at the Tally-Ho, chocolate at Page & Shaw and tried on hats in every shop from Wanamaker's to Tappé's. Leota was tired when she returned home, so she undressed and bathed, eating dinner in a loose boudoir gown and dressing afterwards. She was just finishing her toilet when Claron Wilmott called, so she kept him waiting a few minutes in the living room—purposing drawing out the final details of her toilet, fingering the various ivory and silver things on her dressing table, rubbing imaginary bits of powder from her eyebrows, touching her lips once more with her lip-stick—so that her entrance would be more effective. She wore black and had added a flat gold rose to her bodice.

Wilmott was delighted to see Leota, he told her. He held both of his hands out for her hands and shook them long and heartily. Then, after waiting, with effect, he handed her a box of candy.

Leota was really pleased with the candy—though it was a small box of a kind she did not care for—she liked the idea of getting candy from a man other than her husband.

His presentation over, Wilmott assumed charge of the conversation, telling Leota how pleased he had been to hear from her, how busy he'd been all week, the number of invitations he'd had, the places he'd been.

Wilmott liked to pose as a man-about-town, a prosperous bachelor, a good catch. He was about forty-five, but thought he seemed younger. He was rather fat and florid, with light hair which he parted nearly in the center and whisked up smartly at each side. His skin seemed darker than his hair. His cheeks, which had been quite full early in life, were beginning to pouch and under his chin he was beginning to be quite flabby. He had fat, red hands

and on the backs of them was a quantity of light hair. He was rather a smug fellow, with the conceit that a presentable bachelor who is capable of filling in at dinners and theater parties so frequently acquires.

He sat, now, one leg slightly over the other, bringing well into view his patent leather shoes and tan spats. He wore a grey sack suit with threads of red, blue and green running through the material.

He told Leota of his activities during the past winter, of his popularity, his tact.

"So I said to myself, 'if Mrs. Clifford asks me to come to see her, I'll come, no matter how busy I am. I don't know a finer little woman and that's a fact.' So I telephoned Mrs. Johnson and told her I had a business engagement, out of town. Indeed I did. Not that Mrs. Johnson isn't a fine woman. Indeed she is. And so is Annabelle. But I don't want to get in too deep with them, I don't want to get married. That's a fact. Not that Annabelle or the Johnsons have said anything, you understand. But you can't guess how careful a man's got to be, these days. And, while there are charming women like you who will give a man the honor of calling on them there's no use getting married, now is there? Annabelle Johnson is a fine girl, a fine girl. She'll make some man a fine wife. Only, when I saw how the land lay, asking me to dinner every week or two and to go the opera, not to mention a visit to Greenpoint, I felt I ought to call a halt. Not that I don't enjoy going with them—but there is no use giving the little girl a false impression, raising false hopes, all that. You know how I feel about things. Why should I marry, anyhow? I've got a fine apartment, my own boss, go and come when I please, my club when I want it. Not that I don't think a lot of women—you know I do, Mrs. Clifford. That's what I always say—I love the women—I love all of them. That's why I don't marry—I love the women too much, couldn't choose one from among so many."

He uncrossed his legs, ponderously,

coughed, moved over to the couch where Leota sat, seated himself near her.

"Is he going to make love to me, hold my hand?" thought Leota. She knew well enough that he was. Well, why not? Wasn't that what she wanted, to be made love to by a man not her husband? Hadn't she thought of Wilmott as a most attractive fellow, a popular bachelor?

Sure enough, Wilmott picked up one of Leota's hands, turning over the palm and looked at it, muttering "a good hand, a good hand," then, "such a nice little hand," and squeezed it between his own. Except that it was less painful, the experiment proved about as thrilling as having her nails manicured. Leota drew her hand away and pretended to arrange her hair.

"Now don't get angry, Mrs. Clifford, Leota. I don't mean a thing. Not a thing. You know me too well for that. I like you, my dear young lady, I admire you. That's all, no offense."

"I'm not offended, Mr. Wilmott," said Leota.

Wilmott did not move from his position on the couch. He talked, again, about the past winter, his plans for the summer, the plays he had seen and enjoyed, told what he thought of them. He was fond of the theater and could predict the success of a play from the opening night, every time, it seemed. Then, Leota felt his arm go around her, felt his hand press her toward him, heard him rumble, "Dear little girl, what a dear little girl you are. I love the ladies," felt his face against her, his lips.

Leota stood up, as languidly as she could and went toward the piano, sat on the bench and played a popular air, then turned toward Wilmott, smiling again. There was no use getting angry. Why be the indignant female and hiss "How dare you?" It had been her own fault. If being made love to by a popular bachelor seemed humiliating instead of thrilling—

Wilmott took his rebuff calmly enough. After a moment he returned to his old, cheerful manner, a bit re-

served, dignified, perhaps, to show Leota that other women considered him desirable, that it was she who was in the wrong. Leota tried to listen attentively to his stories, nodding her head and smiling.

Leota had told Freda to prepare oysters à la Thorndike and coffee, and to have them ready at ten. She had thought it would seem so cozy to have a bite to eat at that time. Katie, in a very fresh cap and apron, came now to tell her that the oysters were ready.

The chafing-dish and percolator were on the table when Leota and Wilmott reached the dining room and they both ate heartily of the oysters. This led Wilmott to tell of the numerous dinner invitations he received, how hard it was for him to refuse anyone and how impossible it was to accept them all—a bachelor in New York, it seemed, a popular, eligible, good-looking bachelor, was invited to dinners every evening, his only difficulty being to pick the most desirable dinners.

Wilmott left at eleven, after a hearty good-bye. He pinched Leota's cheek playfully and told her she must "get over being so touchy." He said he'd be glad to come to dinner any night she'd say, in spite of numerous engagements.

Trying to fall asleep that night, Leota went over the affairs of the week—for it would be a week, tomorrow, that Will had gone. An exciting week, yet it hadn't been happy, nothing had gone just right. Of course it had been pleasant, being free, the long mornings of wasted time, of chocolate eating, still, these were things she could do, had done, when Will was home. Of course, Wilmott was dreadful. Still, other men had put their arms around her—years ago, before she was married. It wasn't that. It was the lack of feeling, Wilmott's calm assurance that every woman would yield to him, that he was charming, popular, Wilmott's opinion of her. After all, she had flattered him whenever she met him, had written him a note. She had been a fool. Oh, well, there were other

men besides Haines and Frederickson and Wilmott. Denning for one—he hadn't called yet—he was good-looking and young—she might meet other new men, too—and there was Jeddy. After all, only a week had passed.

Leota wasted Tuesday morning, as she wasted so many mornings. In the afternoon she went downtown, alone, and did some necessary shopping; towels she needed, a new crêpe waist, some caps for Katie. She ate dinner alone, rather grumpily. She had a good appetite, after being in the open air, but she admitted that it was rather a bore, sitting at the table all alone. At least Will was a good listener, really interested in what she was saying, nodding at the right time, laughing at her little jokes. She went to bed early—what else was there to do?

CHAPTER XI

WEDNESDAY was the luncheon Irene Sears was giving for her guest. How silly to give a luncheon at home! It's far more interesting at a restaurant.

The luncheon was at one—and Leota arrived there as she always arrived, a few minutes late but not quite the last. It was the usual luncheon, the hostess nervously gracious, with one eye on the extra maid, the guest of honor chirpy, smiling, the other guests a bit affected, assuming an air of indifference and nonchalance, but ready to chatter, friendly, once the ice was broken. Leota knew most of the guests. She liked the things to eat, all but the eggs with the extraordinary sauce and the size of the frappé. Why will people serve eggs at luncheons and ices in miniature? She invited Irene Sears and her guest to have luncheon with her the following Thursday and to go to a matinée.

Leota ate dinner alone that evening and the next. Three dinners alone! Who could have imagined that Will, plain old Will, could have been so exciting, someone to look forward to, to question about the day's happenings, to talk with?

The music lecture on Friday seemed

more tiresome than usual. Leota was glad there was only one more left, for the season. Each one seemed poorer than the last, but you might as well go, if you're paying for them. Now she couldn't even make fun of this one to Will. It had been lots of fun, laughing over them at dinner.

Leota greeted Saturday with a real quickening of emotion. Here, at last, was something definite to do. All week there had been nothing but the usual day-time engagements with women, shopping, gossiping. But now she was going to have a real adventure, staying all night with Roberta.

Leota went to a matinée with Aline Buell, taking her smallest travelling bag, containing her toilet things and a gown, with her. She hoped things would be all right at home, she'd never been away this way before—both Freda and Katie had promised to stay in, but you couldn't tell what might happen.

After the matinée she and Aline had ice-cream and sat chatting until half-past five, when Aline had to go home to dinner.

Leota took a bus to Roberta's, getting there a few minutes before six. Roberta had just come in. She greeted Leota warmly.

"So here's the little uptown mouse, ready for a vacation. That's fine. Here's your bedroom," pointing to a couch in the front studio room. "Sit down and take off your coat, I'll be ready in a minute. Some luck, little one, the crowd's going to be at the Wet Rat. We're all to eat dinner there, Dutch treat, you know. Something interesting is bound to happen."

Roberta ran around, changing her neat shirt-waist for a more artistic creation, a blouse of purple, with splashes of yellow painted on it. Roberta did nothing artistic, but she liked to pose as artistic, creative, and spoke of her chemistry position as if it were quite important. She had chosen a "studio" instead of an ordinary apartment to further this conceit. It was a grubby enough place, in a made-over building which had far less artistic charm than

the studio occupied by the Hartwell Miles'. That had been, definitely, Gramercy Park, this was "the Village."

The "studio" was of medium size, but was strewn with dozens of meaningless articles, an odd hat, an empty straw-covered claret bottle, shoes. On the tables were perhaps fifty magazines in various stages of disintegration, covers gone, ragged edged. The walls, originally yellow, showed unfaded squares where pictures had been. They were hung now with weird examples of modern "art" and huge posters, announcing balls at Webster Hall and lectures by radicals, vividly colored, slightly torn. The furniture was kitchen stuff, cheap chairs and tables, painted in bright, cheap, disharmonizing colors.

Off the studio was a tiny kitchenette—a gas burner with two holes, a small ice box, a row of pots and pans hanging on nails above the stove, a tiny cabinet of dishes and provisions. This was separated from the studio by a brown screen, also ornamented with posters and new "art." A bathroom, containing an old tin tub, whose latest coat of enamel was beginning to disappear, and a tiny bedroom with a single iron bed and dresser, completed the studio. Curtains of a brown material resembling burlap hung at the windows and the couch was covered with a strip of blue velvet, which did not quite reach to the back, the deficiency being concealed by half a dozen cushions in a row. A woman was supposed to clean the apartment while Roberta was at work, but as Roberta was not particular this was often neglected.

Leota knew she ought to see more beauty in Roberta's apartment than she did. She admitted it was smug and uptown to prefer cleanliness and order and a pleasant view from her windows. Roberta couldn't afford those things, but she said other things were more important—freedom, doing what you liked, even having an affair. This wasn't a cage, at any rate.

Roberta was a pleasant-looking girl, a year or two younger than Leota. She was of medium height, rather fair,

and inclined to be a little too stout. She had a good color, a short, upturned nose with frank nostrils, a flabby mouth and weak chin. She went with people younger than herself, usually, and liked to think that she was "just a girl."

"Come on," she said. "We're to meet the others at the Wet Rat. Seems good to you to get away, doesn't it? Don't see how you stand it, never getting out or meeting people or seeing anything."

"Oh, I do get out," Leota found herself unexpectedly defending her mode of life, "I go to see all the good shows and go to all the restaurants and roof gardens and go to luncheons and dances and—"

"Oh, things like that," dismissed Roberta. "I mean real things, people who think. Wait till you see our crowd tonight."

Leota wanted to see them, wanted to be convinced.

The Wet Rat was one of the newest of the Village restaurants, Roberta told her, on the way over. The common herd, the up-town seekers for novelty had not yet found it. It still belonged to the sacred inner circle of thinkers.

Before she became conscious of her thoughts, Leota wished Will was with her. Will would so have enjoyed these people—he always spoke of them as "a little group of serious pikers." Then she remembered—Will, indeed! Because Will was a scoffer, who did not believe in free thought, in self-expression, must she bow to him? Had married life enslaved her so that she could not think alone, that she must see things through his eyes? Why, she could be free, as free as Roberta. This was real—living—

The Wet Rat looked to Leota like the average Village restaurants she had seen. But of course it was different. She'd soon see that.

The restaurant had been, originally, the basement of an old house. The various pipes still showed, on the ceiling, but the ceiling and walls had been painted a bright blue, ornamented with yellow stripes. The tables and chairs

were the usual kitchen variety, painted red and black, and the tables had a paper napkin at each place, in lieu of table cloths. You could see into the kitchen, from the open door at the back, but, after one look, Leota decided it was just as well not to.

A rude, ill-mannered girl, with a rough, unpleasant voice and oily-looking hair, cut short like a cap, was the proprietor. She nodded to Roberta and called, "The crowd's over there, Miller."

They passed through narrow aisles of tables to a long table near the rear, where about ten people were already seated.

"Here's Roberta," "Hello, old sport," "Hello, Miller," members of the group called. Leota was introduced all around, not as "Mrs. Clifford," but as "A friend of mine, Leota Clifford." There were no titles in the Wet Rat, it seemed.

After much moving and chair scraping, places were made for Roberta and Leota, and Leota had a fairly clean paper napkin in front of her and a knife marked "The Blue Bird" and a bent-tined fork engraved "The Happy Cricket." She looked around at her new acquaintances. The men looked as if they might be clerks or bookkeepers. They were fairly neat but poorly dressed. One had rather long hair and all but one was smooth-shaven. Four of the women had on the plain shirt-waist-and-skirt outfit of the average saleswoman or office worker, one wore a smock of bright red crêpe, not very clean, another a dress of pale blue, trimmed with many ruffles, the sort of dress a small-town belle would have delighted in.

Ordinarily, Leota would have felt rather sorry for this group, because they were not more prosperous. But she saw that sympathy was out of place, that they were all self-satisfied, conceited, superior. The conversation was rather loud but not at all remarkable. There was the news that "Jim thought he had sold a story to *Munsey's*," followed by sarcastic references to Jim and his writing ability. Someone else they

knew had had an article in the *New Republic*, three weeks before. This was discussed at length as if it were epochal. They talked of other writers they knew, of mutual friends, repeating bits of scandal. They agreed that the food was "the best in town for the price." A few acquaintances came to their table to talk, but the conversation was commonplace—the whole affair reminded Leota of the suppers she had had, years before, at the Young People's League, in the basement of the church, in Westmont. Yet, these people were supposed to be "living their own lives," "creating art," things like that. Roberta had even told Leota that several of these people were living in domesticity unfettered by the marriage bond, that they had nobly "thrown aside convention." To Leota, the dinner, even the famous "beef stew" which they all had advised her to take, was absolutely inedible, so she nibbled on a bit of heavy bread. She was awfully hungry. The cigarette smoke hurt her eyes. There was no ventilation.

The crowd talked on and on. Leota listened wearily, to hear, for the third time, about the story one of the group had sold, a full year ago, to a second-rate magazine. She found that many of the group had inartistic positions by which they earned their livings, and, though they talked of success, they seemed to lack all definite aim. Everything they were doing, writing or art, no matter how small, was wonderful, brilliant, new, and the work of all others, especially people who had achieved success, was banal, stupid, commercial. They were fearfully in earnest. Most of them had come from small towns and still retained their small-town mannerisms. Instead of being worldly, cultured, clever, as Leota had hoped they would be, outside of a few affectations they were more provincial than she was, wrapped up in their own narrow little set, prejudiced, rather dull. As far as Leota could tell, they had produced nothing in any line which, even if "discovered," could make them famous in any way, though they were all

looking forward to fame, as their natural due.

At ten Leota asked Roberta if they were to stay much longer, her head was starting to hurt badly. Roberta suggested they go to the Brevoort, there was always a good crowd there. Two of the men and the girl in the red smock offered to accompany them. The rest of the crowd declared they were "broke" and would "go up to Gertie's." The party at the Brevoort would, of course, be Dutch treat, as all Village parties were.

CHAPTER XII

LEOTA liked the Brevoort. She went there frequently with Will and some of their friends, driving down after the theater. How often she wished she had known some of the distinguished-looking people she saw. She had always felt a bit out of it, middle-class. Now she was with people who would know everyone.

They found a vacant table in the middle room. Leota liked that, they could see everyone who came in. The people at her table nodded to others. They pointed out Jefferson, the magazine writer; McManus, who had had a serial running in a popular weekly. Then, Ardley Dupont went through, stopped at their table! Dupont was one of Leota's favorite writers of fiction—he wrote wonderful things about glowing nights, heart throbs, moonlight on silver water, passionate kisses. She could hardly believe it possible when she was introduced and heard his name. He was a pompous, fat little fellow, with a bright eye and a perkily held head. He was glad she liked his last book—his next would be out in a week or two, the best thing he'd ever done—advanced copies had gone to the reviewers and were getting wonderful notices. He was sure of himself, smug, vain. Leota noticed, too, that her new acquaintances, who had said they despised commercial successes, hung on his words in a worshipful attitude. No, he couldn't wait, not even for one drink—a whole

table of friends waiting for him. He bowed sprightly, was gone. She had met a real writer at last, and, remembering the real thrills the books had given her and their smug, bantam-like author, she was sorry she had.

Leota's crowd ordered many rounds of drinks and she ordered a chicken sandwich, too. She didn't care much about drinking, but the people began to seem a little brighter, gayer. Three others joined their party, a thin, tired woman whose husband was a lecturer; two men, both thin, pale; one sold bonds. They were full of the Revolution.

"Do you know what is going to happen, what is already happening, as we sit here in idleness?" one of the men asked Leota. Leota couldn't imagine.

"Revolution," said the man. "The People won't stand a bit more. Why should they? Why shouldn't they have everything—instead of the millionaire and capitalists having everything? This, all this," he motioned with thin hands, "will fall. It is getting ready to topple, even now. Why shouldn't it? This thin layer of civilization is on the edge of a mighty volcano—you can hear the rumbling. A year from now, six months, this will all be gone."

"I don't think so," said Leota. Not thinking so seemed the best way to get rid of so unpleasant a thought.

"Bah—what *you* think! What do *you* know? It will come. In a few months we will not be here. This will be gone—all gone."

Leota wondered how she had gone on, not knowing what was about to happen. She grew cold and shivered. Maybe it was on account of the drinks.

They talked of the revolution for an hour. There were more drinks. Leota noticed that Roberta was gayer, was talking, gesturing.

Leota glanced around the room. There, at a table close by, were the Hills and the Kennedys. She smiled at them brightly, then looked at the reflection of her own table in the mirror. Leota wasn't really a snob, she felt. Yet she was rather ashamed of this

company, these cheap-looking men, untidy-looking women. How clean and correct the Hills and the Kennedys looked!—why, Will always looked correct and clean, too. Of course, now she was with real thinkers, Bohemians, she ought to feel beyond the thought of superficial appearance. She wondered what her friends were thinking about her. Of course she could tell them, later, what a wonderful time she had had, make them jealous of her freedom . . .

When the waiters began piling chairs on tables and the lights flickered, her crowd was ready to go. Each person made an attempt to pay for himself, but Leota knew that her bill was larger than the drinks and sandwich she had had. She didn't mind that—Will was generous with household money. But she did feel embarrassed as she paid it—she had never paid for a meal while men had been present or at night—she didn't know whether or not she should tip. She gave the waiter a tip of fifty cents and he thanked her, so it must have been all right.

The group went with them to Roberta's studio and all came in. Roberta brought out some whiskey and some rather warm soda and they drank it out of dull-looking glasses. One of the men stretched out on the couch and fell asleep. The girls sat on the floor. Roberta had stopped being gay and was silent and a bit sullen.

At half past two the crowd left. Leota was tired. They had all been so, well, rather mussy. Even their jokes had been unpleasant toward the end and the men put their hands on your shoulder, touching you, saying things not at all respectful. Leota started to undress slowly. She felt as if she were doing something wrong to stay. She wished she'd decided to go home.

Roberta started to cry. Leota, trying to cheer her up, made her tears flow faster.

"You don't understand," sobbed Roberta, "you don't understand anything. Here I am, poor girl, all alone in city, no one, no one."

"That's all right," Leota soothed. She

was not used to people who had been drinking. Will never drank much and you couldn't tell he'd ever had anything. "You'll be all right in the morning."

"I'm a poor girl, all alone, nobody loves me. You're so stupid, you think I'm a bad, bad girl."

"Why, I don't at all," said Leota.

"And Charlie, he went away."

"But you sent him away. You told me so, last year. You were both free, so when you found you no longer loved, you separated without the blackness of marriage or divorce."

"Never sent him away. He went. He said we were all wrong, got religion and all that. Didn't want freedom of youth. Called me old girl, married girl of nineteen, bond of matrimony. I don't know a man, nineteen, to marry. He don't like the Village any more. I'm all alone in cruel city, all alone."

Leota cheered up Roberta a little and got her to bed. Then she made the couch into a bed as best she could, with the gray-looking sheets she managed to find under Roberta's directions. They looked unpressed, unsanitary. She hated to crawl in between them. Why had she left her own apartment for this sort of thing?

She waked up about ten on Sunday. Roberta was still asleep. She tried to clean up some of the numerous cigarette ashes, to get the smell of smoke and liquor out of the room. Her head still ached. At twelve, after an unpleasant and not very successful effort to bathe and dress, she waked Roberta.

Roberta was more cheerful than she had expected to find her. She'd be all right if she had some coffee. Leota puttered around the kitchenette and made some as good as she could and Roberta, unbathed, came into the studio for it, wearing an untidy pink kimono. There was also some stale bread and preserves, though neither of them cared for those.

Roberta retold the story she had hinted at, the night before. She and Charlie had separated, not so much because she had wanted to go her way as because he had wanted to go his. Roberta admitted this was the way things

should be—personal liberty. Charlie was forty and was getting ahead in business. Freedom no longer appealed to him. He wanted to settle down, a home and a position, his own friends. He didn't want to be laughed at for the nonsense of his youth. He was married now and didn't come to the Village. And Roberta, though she stoutly maintained that she was "free and had a right to live her own life," felt that life was not being awfully kind to her.

Leota was amazed to see, though Roberta wouldn't admit it, that Roberta envied Leota's life, stupid, uninspired, up-town, middle-class, cared for. Roberta insisted that Will was a bore, that Leota was "wasting herself, never lived or felt"—but she knew that she, herself, was getting on, she didn't want to keep on working as a chemist always, paying for her own meals, spending a lot of time alone . . .

Leota left, after she'd helped put the studio in order. Someone telephoned, asking Roberta to go to a party that afternoon, and Roberta, accepting gleefully, wanted Leota to go along, promising another "good time like we had last night." But Leota said she had a headache, which was true enough. The ride seemed dreadfully long.

She took another bath and washed her hair as soon as she got home and gave Katie directions to have all of the things she had worn washed immediately or sent to the cleaners. They were definitely unwearable. She spent the rest of the day lying down or trying to read a little. She was quite tired.

CHAPTER XIII

A WHOLE week passed, a usual week, except that Leota ate her dinner all alone and spent lonely evenings too full of novel-reading and chocolate-eating. There were two committee meetings, and on Wednesday she went to a matinee with Aline. Thursday she took Irene Sears and her guest to Sherry's for luncheon and then to the matinee and to tea. Friday morning was the last musical lecture of the season and

later she and Aline and a Mrs. Halpin spent the day shopping. Saturday was the loneliest day of all, a long day of nothing to do.

Sunday afternoon Howard Denning called. He was a nice boy, even Leota had to admit that. They had tea and then talked. But Denning, with his little flatteries and jokes, his gay little efforts, wasn't very exciting. At a dinner party, with other people around, even sitting in a box at the theater, he decidedly had his place. But, having him all alone, with his little presumptions that he was desirable, even necessary, wasn't pleasant. Leota was rather glad when he went away. What was the matter with men, anyhow? It couldn't be altogether her fault. She wasn't ugly nor old nor terribly stupid. There must be men, some place, wonderful men. Then she thought of Dr. Stanton and Jeddy.

Dr. Stanton was wonderful, awfully popular, almost too popular, people said. But he liked her, Leota knew that. He'd told her so. Not because he was her physician—her regular doctor was an old gray-haired dear—she had just had Dr. Stanton for nerve trouble, last year. He'd asked to call, take her to dinner, then.

Monday morning Leota rang him up. He seemed surprised, when she told him she was "just lonely and had thought of him," but when she asked him to come to dinner "any day this week you aren't busy," he accepted quite promptly for Wednesday. Still, that wasn't enough. Leota wanted something even more exciting.

Here, three weeks of her freedom were over. Cablegrams from Will told her that he might be home even a little earlier than he had anticipated. She hadn't lived, broken away from the commonplace, escaped—she must do something . . .

She thought again of Jeddy. These other men—she had no bond with them. Frederickson, his friends, the unwashed, stupid acquaintances of Roberta—Haines—Wilmott—but Jeddy was different. Still, she had written him

a note and he hadn't answered. Maybe he hadn't received her note. That was it, of course. Often, Will complained because he didn't get his mail, someone else in the office had opened a personal letter or something—

Half a dozen times she found herself near the telephone. At last she looked up his number in the telephone book, gave the number to the operator. An impersonal woman's voice answered, with the usual, "Wait a minute, please," another woman's voice, cool, distinct—his secretary, of course—"who wished to speak with Mr. Hallidan?"

"Mrs. Clifford," said Leota, then she remembered that maybe Jeddy wouldn't remember her last name, "Leota French Clifford," she answered. A pause, a click, then a man's voice, calm, rather formal.

"Good morning. This is Mr. Hallidan."

"Oh, good morning. This is Leota—Leota French, you know."

"Good morning," briskly cordial.

"I—I wrote you a note, did you get it?"

"Why, yes, I did. Awfully glad to hear from you. I've been awfully busy, you know. I've been expecting to call on you."

So—he had got her note, after all. She went on, rather limply:

"I just thought it would be—be rather nice to see you again. It's been so long—"

"I should like to see you, I'm sure."

"I'd like you to call, come in to tea, some afternoon."

"I'm rather busy for teas, but I'd be glad to."

"Any day this week?"

A pause then.

"Yes, this week will be all right. Thursday?"

"Thursday will be splendid. You'll call, then?"

"Yes, good-bye."

Leota left the telephone rather dazed, muttering the words she had used, wishing she had said something else. Then a solution came to her, a comfortable solution—he had been telephoning from

the office, of course—how could he be anything but politely formal, a married man with his secretary right at his elbow. Of course it was that. How stupid of her—all these years—she was to see Jeddy on Thursday.

But this was only Monday. The day dragged.

Leota decided to eat alone that evening, in the Village. That's how other women met people, not anything as vulgar as "picking up," of course, but people who did things—if you went to artistic places—

Leota put on her dark tailored suit and her plainest hat. She chose The Monk's Cave, a place she had heard mentioned at Hartwell Miles's tea and when she was with Roberta. Everyone who counted went there, sooner or later. She knew where it was, too.

Leota called up the garage. The car arrived promptly and she got to the restaurant just about six. It was another basement restaurant but nicer than the Wet Rat, with brown walls and tables. Leota shared a table with three others. She knew no one. Little groups came in, but they talked only among themselves. Leota tried to say something pleasant to those at her table. They coolly ignored her. She felt uncomfortable and ill-at-ease without an escort. She hurried through her meal and went home.

But Tuesday she was lonely again and decided to try dining out alone once more. She chose The Blue Plume, a cheerful little place with yellow walls stencilled with strange birds in blue hangings. There was clean linen on the tables—and napkins. Leota looked around, but, when no eager acquaintances beckoned, she chose a small table against the wall. The food was quite satisfactory. Leota looked around, interested, but no one spoke to her. The diners, in twos and fours, were quiet, decent, rather dull looking. They did not seem to want to make friends.

Finally a man came in and took the seat across from her. He was not bad looking, with grey hair, a thick mus-

tache—he might have been anyone—oh, quite likely an artist.

"All alone?" he asked.

"Yes," said Leota. "It's pleasant here, isn't it? Quite nice."

"Yes, I like it. Come here often." His voice seemed rather uneven. He ordered a cup of coffee. "Never saw you here before."

"I've never been here before."

"Newcomer, eh? New in New York? Better get acquainted."

Leota couldn't quite place him. His voice was thick, unpleasant. Had he been drinking? It was quite early to be drunk, just half-past six. Still, he was peculiar. Leota hurried through her pastry and demi-tasse, called the waiter, paid her bill.

"Not in a hurry?" asked the man across the table.

"Rather."

"Don't want to wait for me?"

"I'm afraid not."

She hurried out. She had ridden down on the bus and there was no taxicab in sight. It was rather dark. She hesitated. The man came out of the restaurant, grabbed her arm.

"Oh, there you are. Afraid you'd give me the slip."

"Let me go," said Leota.

"There, there, don't take it so hard, young lady. No harm meant, no harm meant. We're old friends, ain't we, old friends? Come, let's go some place and have a drink, nice little drink—"

Leota pulled away, frightened, started to run down the street. A taxi passed. She hailed it, climbed in. She couldn't see the man when she looked out. Her heart was beating frightfully. Of course there wasn't anything to be afraid of, so early in the evening. Women ate alone every night, nothing happened to them—Roberta made her friends in restaurants—Roberta—in the future she wasn't going out alone, after dark. It was quite all right, of course, only—well, she wouldn't try it.

CHAPTER XIV

WEDNESDAY Dr. Stanton arrived promptly at seven. Leota was ready to
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receive him and he squeezed her fingers, bowed low over her hand. She remembered now what wonderful manners he had. He was so complete, finished, his smooth brown hair, his pointed beard, his good-looking boots.

He led the conversation to mutual friends, saying something courteous and pleasant about everyone. He told Leota how splendid she was looking, inquired politely after Will. When dinner was announced he took Leota's arm with an assumed, pompous gaiety and marched into the dining room.

The dinner was good. Leota was glad of that. After the soup, Dr. Stanton relaxed a bit, told Leota about some of the cases he had been attending.

"Science is marching ahead these days, my dear young lady. Different methods for everything. The women have more time to get sick, too. Anything wrong—they send for me. Not because it's me, of course, but they like having a man around, in their bedrooms, delicious impropriety, yet quite permissible. How they do try to charm me! And the things they tell me! Now that I've gone in for psychoanalysis the cases range from compound imagination to real insanity, with ego-centricism at the base of most of them. I can't tell you her name, of course, but one of my patients . . ."

Dr. Stanton launched into a case—a woman who hated her husband, had had several affairs but had maintained an outward semblance of domesticity. Now she had a bad case of nerves, wanted to leave her husband but had no place to go. So now she was being analyzed, to make her like her husband well enough so she might continue to allow him to support her.

"She'll stay with him, of course. She has no money nor ability to do anything and no one else wants her. The poor husband is fond of her. She's a cold proposition—she's looking forward to the time when her husband has enough money to give her alimony—she'll leave him, then. Laziness and a vacant mind, the thing that's the matter with most women who have nerves. She likes me

to talk to her, flatter her with the usual patter. Man's a fine fellow, if he were left alone. Another case, Mrs. G. is in love with another man—sometimes the cases are transparent, a few simple dreams to interpret, an easy solving—some cases, really serious, paranoia, dementia precox, ego-centricism magnified—that's what we're trying to prevent."

Leota listened. She liked this. Then, Dr. Stanton, interested in his work, quite sure he had an interested listener, went deeper into his pet subjects, he left psychoanalysis, with its interesting cases of husbands who hated their wives, complexes, repressions and neuroses and went deep into blood cultures, tissue transplantations an interesting case of advanced contracted kidney—really remarkable to have had the advantage of attending it—and Leota lost her appetite for dinner. She couldn't eat another bite. It was foolish of her, of course. The things Dr. Stanton told were things she shouldn't have felt so squeamish about—she should have been broad-minded, she knew—but sentences—tuberculous effusion, old pleuritic adhesions—well, dinner was spoiled.

Dr. Stanton enjoyed his dinner. He talked as he ate, the influenza epidemic—complications not ordinarily found—a bloody mucopurulent discharge—patient recovering all right, now—another case, a little child, slight perforation in anterior fold of left ear—

Of course, she should have felt flattered, Leota knew that—wasn't Dr. Stanton being confidential, telling her about his most interesting cases—but her appetite for an awfully good dinner was spoiled.

After dinner, in the living room, Dr. Stanton played the piano. He played quite well, much better than Leota. Then he talked about his work again, the women who came to him, stupid, ego-centric, self-centered, wanting to get away from the real issues of life, women who hate their husbands because the husbands are not earning enough money, haven't enough sex attraction, women who haven't brains

enough to have outside interests—

Leota saw all women as Dr. Stanton regarded them—on pins in a laboratory, not pretty and clever and human, but cases—interesting or dull. He told her the sorts of things he was compelled to tell his patients—similar to the things he had told her last year—soothing them by trying to get them interested in other things, away from themselves, flattering them into normality, trying, as a priest might do, to patch up family quarrels, to bring together the broken edges of pitiful little domestic groups. Cases—cases—A—Mrs. C.—why, Dr. Stanton wasn't human—he could see right through her, through her miserable little conceits—see if her heart was all right—her kidneys—her lungs—her brain—she was just a chart to him, a case, ready to cut into.

"It has been delightful of you to let me come to see you," he had risen and was bowing over her hand again.

"It is so good to get away from the woman with a problem, to meet a charming, normal person like yourself, healthily alive. I did enjoy our little chat. You'll have dinner with me next week? I have several confinements due during the week—I dare not make a definite engagement now—may I 'phone you Monday or Tuesday?"

Was she like those other women—a nothing, a problem, a Mrs. C. who hated her husband?—Leota went to sleep in an orgy of cases, blood tests, operations.

CHAPTER XV

It was Thursday afternoon. Jeddy was coming to call. Leota retouched her eyebrows and lips for the dozenth time. She turned her head to the right, wondered if she were really getting lines under her chin—wasn't there really a wrinkle on the side of her face near her ear? They say the first wrinkle comes there. Did the tiny wrinkles that were around her eyes and mouth show, if one didn't look too closely?

She was in a fever of excitement when the bell rang. She powdered

nervously again, put down her long-handled, monogrammed mirror, when she heard Katie answer the bell. She had been so afraid the telephone would ring instead—that he wouldn't come—what if—now, maybe he did care a little—

"Jeddy," she said, with her gayest smile, as she went forward to meet him.

The eager boy she had visualized all these years was gone. She saw a tall man, with rather a tired, lined face, who looked older than his thirty-five years.

"How do you do, Leota," he said, rather solemnly.

"Shall we go in here?" said Leota, leading the way into the living room. She was rather ill at ease, she found. She didn't know just what to say. She had planned things differently.

"It's—it's good to see you again, Jeddy, after all these years. Were you surprised to get my note?"

"Yes, yes, quite surprised. And how are you and—Mr. Clifford. Quite well, I hope. Is he at home today?"

"Oh, no, he's in England, you know, on business."

"He isn't here—at all?"

"Why, no. Now tell me about you. What are you doing? How is the world treating you?"

Gradually, Leota saw that Jeddy relaxed. She breathed a bit easier. When Katie came in with the tea things she served tea prettily and was able to eat quite a number of little cakes—she always served the kinds she liked best and had tried to have an especially nice tea for Jeddy.

There was little to talk about. Jeddy hadn't seen anyone from Westmont in months—in two years to be exact—no, he didn't get the Westmont papers—one grows so away from one's home town, doesn't one—it was years, now—

As he talked, Leota knew what had been the matter. Jeddy had dreaded coming—he had been, well, afraid. Jeddy was getting ahead, socially. He felt that he was quite above Leota, he didn't want anyone from Westmont clinging to him—holding him down, an

old sweetheart might be dangerous. He had come to tea to find out what Leota had wanted, he was worried at her note, her telephoning. Now that he found Leota had no real motive except friendliness he was relieved, though still the snob and the climber.

As Leota saw how Jeddy felt, she rose to an appreciation of her position, of Will. Why, Will was worth two of Jeddy, quite as good looking, manners as good, too, not nearly such a snob—and Will's position, clubs—why Will—

Usually Leota did not brag, she never thought of it. Now she felt herself saying little things, things about Will, about the people who entertained them, about the decorator who had done the apartment, conceited things, insufferable, of course, but the things Jeddy understood.

"I had been so interested in seeing you," she said, smiling, "to see what the years had done to you. There ought to be an old-home week in Westmont, when we could all go and see old friends—and then be glad that things happened with ourselves the way they did."

She was glad when Jeddy went away.

But, after he had gone for a little while, she cried. It seemed, now, that she had been wanting to cry for weeks. Yet, at first, she didn't know what she was crying about. Not because Jeddy had turned out to be so impossible. Why, he had always been hard, a bit climbing, selfish, not especially handsome. Not about Jeddy, not even because there were no more men to be nice to her. It wasn't that—for Denning had telephoned yesterday, while she was out, Frederickson had telephoned the day before, Dr. Stanton would telephone, Wilmott, even, had written a note—they wanted to be entertained, invited to dinners. She had run after these men, she knew. There were none of them who really cared for her, who were interested, sincerely—there was no one, any place, who really was interested, but Will.

—No, she wasn't crying about Will, about the cage. For, now, there wasn't

any cage—she could be free, if she wanted to. It wasn't because she was just a case, one of Dr. Stanton's selfish, stupid women. It was more than that. She knew she was selfish, self-centered. She knew she couldn't earn her own living, except in some terrible, scrubby, way, if she tried. She knew she had no artistic knowledge or ambition, didn't like artistic people, had nothing to say to them. She knew she hated the kind of life Roberta led—the ugliness of it—she knew Will bored her—but—why, that was it, of course.

Will did bore her—she was caged—but she was used to it! Now Will wasn't here. It was Will she wanted—stupid, heavy, of course, tiresome certainly—but she hadn't anyone else. No one else interested her or was interested in her, for that matter. Why, Will did so much—little things—flowers, candy, this apartment—he wanted so little in return. Will, patient, kindly, what if he were dull—why, even now, in England, there were other women, anything might happen—what if she had to be alone, free—

Why, of course she was caged—but she needed the cage, its comforts—she would be helpless outside—she had no wings—she couldn't fly—the cage was the nicest thing she knew.

CHAPTER XVI

Two weeks more, alone, no one to tell things to at dinner, no one to tease, to talk to, interested, flattering—two weeks more—

Well, there was Will's sister—she was like Will, dependable. She would listen, when Leota talked. She knew she couldn't stand it—this way—eating with awful men or in terrible restaurants—or all alone, at home.

She dried her eyes. What if they were red—there was no one to see—She walked over to her desk, pulled out a sheet of monogrammed paper, started a letter:

Dear Ida:

As you know, Will is in England and it will be several weeks before he returns. I think it would be jolly if you. . . .



THE FRUITS

By Dorothy Burne

THE old folks murmur and shake their heads
And they say, "You'd best beware,
For though the blossoms of Love be sweet
Love's fruits are sorrow and care."

But I laugh as I shake the boughs of Love
Till the blossoms drift at my feet;—
For how can Love's fruits be bitter
When the blossoms are—oh—so sweet?



THE CHAMELEON

By Thomas Beer

MY first meeting with Angelica was pleasant, although not seemly. She advanced into a half-moon of firelit relatives with rather a swagger, complaining loudly of a shortage in nightgowns. Angelica was seven at this time and more than inclined to stoutness.

The relatives smiled with some restraint, rattling their after-dinner coffee cups. Angelica's mother moaned and I giggled. A horrified, pursuing nurse wrapped Angelica in something and took her away. I think she was spanked on the stairs. Certainly, she yelled and if this was one of her earliest impersonations, it was almost perfect. She sounded exactly like an irritated steam engine.

This led me to remember Angelica. The next time we encountered each other was in my fourteenth summer. Supported by her parents and her brother, the virgin came to stay a week and I admit that she alarmed me. The Kenyons were jolly, emphatic, handsome people and they burst upon us in a rather tumultuous fashion, with several attached dogs. But Angelica gave me a flaccid hand and said, "Ah, yes, how d'you do!" in a tone of weary sorrow. Her hazel eyes wandered desolately off past my head toward some unguessed point of the library and fixed themselves on it, with a bitter, baffled flickering. She coiled herself into a basket chair and ate only five cakes at teatime.

"What on earth's the matter with the kid?" I asked her brother Hamish, when we were going to bed.

Hamish responded, through his undershirt, that nothing was wrong.

"But she acts as if she'd lost her last friend," I argued.

"Oh—that. Oh, she's doin' Mrs. Varick," Hamish grinned.

"Who's Mrs. Varick?"

"She's a friend of mother's. She's English. Her husband's explorin' the North Pole—or South—anyway, he's been gone a devil of a while and she's worried. She was stayin' with us."

The next morning, I discovered Angelica on one of the garden benches, her ankles straightly crossed, staring in a ghastly manner at a rosebed. At small intervals, she passed a hand across her brow, then drew a little smoke from one of her father's cigarettes into her mouth and puffed it out again.

As she had not heard me and there was no other possible witness I excused her of any attempt at showing off and sat hopefully down on the turf and waited for her to be sick. But she was, perhaps, hardened to the taste of tobacco.

I grew restless presently and strolled up.

"H'lo, Angelica," I remarked; "want to play tennis?"

She drew her gaze from the roses and lent it to me briefly.

"I don't care about sports, Donald," she sighed.

"My name's Roger," I snapped. "An' you know it!"

"Is it?" said Angelica, dreamily. "It doesn't matter."

She selected another mark and stared at the greenhouse.

There has always been an utter sincerity in these passages. I looked at Angelica with awe and backed off. She

maintained her lamentable posture, even when she knew I was gone.

"Oh, soon as she finds somebody else," Hamish assured me, "she'll cut it out. She does, y'know."

"But—what does she do it for?"

"Dunno," said Hamish, carelessly. "Lasts about a month."

I think it was her choice of the garden as a solitude which launched the next phase. It happened that our neighbor was an artist of the successful sort. He worked out of doors, very often, and had a booming, pleasant voice which frequently swept over our hedge and as his servants were all male and his wife very deaf, he allowed himself quite a free choice of phrases. Also, he often whistled.

It was the whistling in the upper hall that drew my attention to one of Angelica's most startling effects.

I knew she was upstairs, getting ready for luncheon and I was sitting on the stairs, as the guests for this shindig—a very staid lawyer and his wife—bored me fearfully. Angelica began to whistle "Sole Mio" in a luscious series of slides, squeezing all the melody from the thing to the last trill.

Hamish, in the hall below, raised his head, interested and suspicious.

"Is that the kid? She's got another one!"

Angelica stamped down the carpetless treads, her hands in her skirt pockets, at a jaunty gait and gave me a friendly kick in passing.

"When the blue hell do we eat?" she inquired, using a note of her lower register. I gasped. Hamish choked.

"Kid," he said desperately. "Cut it out!—anyhow don't talk!"

But she stalked into the library like an entering heavy-weight champion, and we began to expect the worst, directly, as luncheon commenced.

I think it was during consomme that the first eruption broke. The topic of boarding-schools had drifted to the surface of the tedious meal and Judge Brinkley turned his legal beams on Angelica.

"I expect you'll be going away to school one of these days."

"Damned if I do," said Angelica, barytone. "Heifer paddocks! They—"

I don't think Judge Brinkley quite caught her sentence. There was a wavelet of dismay. I gripped the edge of the table and sweated apprehension. Mrs. Brinkley got the next jolt. She may have been curious about the child.

"Have you a governess, dear?" she asked.

"Yes and—Jesu Marie!—of all the damn'd nuisance! She—"

"Angelica," said Mrs. Kenyon in the dry voice of doom, "go upstairs at once."

Angelica swung on her heel in the doorway and pointed a thumb at her parent.

"You're the hell of a mother, you are!" she shouted and vanished. She whistled the hoochie-coochie ascending, and the success of her performance is still remembered by our cook, who crosses herself when Angelica is mentioned.

II

It was an evil day for the Kenyons when some misguided friend took Angelica to see Bernhardt in "La Tosca." Of course, she went stage-struck a dozen times. I forgot who was the model voluptuary of her worst offering. We had been doing the London theaters one June and from some enchantress she inhaled poison which burst into a rash of clothes in Paris. Hamish was the liberal fool, then. He was stupid enough to give her two thousand francs. It served. There was a positive swirl of turning persons in the Ritz lounge when she came down to dinner and Hamish went white.

"My—soul!" he muttered.

It was very awful. This was when the female shape had its most thorough exposition and some depraved dress-maker had seized Angelica for an advertisement. She tottered along, her head bent backward so that it suggested a disease of the neck and seemed to be

inspecting the rear of her right shoulder. Her body glimmered in a wrapping of purple satin and a profuse bloom of orchids grew on the middle somewhere, almost dwarfing a colossal fan of ostrich feathers. Several people rose in far corners and a number of cocktails spilled.

"Kid," said Hamish, between his teeth, "I won't go into the dining-room with you. That's flat! Go up and take that thing off, d'you hear?"

She gave him no particular heed, as I recollect it, but advanced on me, her naked arm sliding out like a serpent.

"So sorry, old thing," she declared, "but my beast of a maid's ill. I think the brute takes drugs. Shall we go in?"

She continued this sort of rubbish through half of dinner. Hamish fidgeted and writhed. Angelica had no maid, nor most of the other appanages she mentioned. These included a "place" in Scotland.

"Well, we're going to Switzerland tomorrow," Hamish groaned. "I can't stand this."

She gave him a look of satiate disgust and a dozen people chuckled.

"Switzerland's full of ghastly objects in June," she said. "Americans and that sort of thing. One can't go there."

"One can," Hamish granted.

Our progress across France was a nightmare. Angelica hung herself with a batlike cloak of some slippery black stuff and painted her face arsenic white. Veils hid the innocuous yellow of her hair. She smoked cigarettes constantly in the station restaurant and five men tried to follow her into our carriage. At Basle, a fat Italian sent Hamish his card with an offer to buy her for fifty thousand lire. Fortunately, Hamish cannot read Italian. The worst was the episode of Max von Nilstadt.

While I think badly enough of German manners, in the princely sort, I have never blamed Max. He was a harmless young idiot with a bleating voice and a small court of tutors and equerries. I believe he was in exile after some scrape.

Angelica, in a cerise affair covered

with sequins, dawned or exploded in his history on a terrace full of dowdy women, by moonlight. I remember that his jaw dropped.

"For the love of Pete," said Hamish, "stop looking at every man you see!"

"There's nothing else worth looking at, old dear. Women are such rotters, aren't they, Roger? I say, we might have a brandy and soda before we feed, what?"

She vented this wish immediately in front of the table where Max was experimenting with a cocktail. She gave it a very proper British twist. It sounded like all Piccadilly bottled.

"You little fool," said Hamish.

Max gazed upon her from a hundred angles until ten o'clock. He spied from behind palms and trickled out of doors in our wake. Hamish dragged her off to bed, then, and sat on mine with his head in his hands. We agreed that, some time, she would get into trouble. The prophecy came true in about five minutes. Angelica gave a well-developed merely American shriek, across the corridor.

Her account of the matter is that she only thanked Max for getting out of her way on the stairs. She confessed to having gone down again to buy some cigarettes. At any rate, we found him with his shoulders painfully jammed through the door and bleating. Angelica, leaning on the inside of her defences, was pounding his face with one hand and holding the doorknob with the other. Hamish extracted him by the coat-tails and slung him a few yards. I think he was glad to get away. We left next morning and Angelica imitated nothing for some months.

III

I HAVE never forgiven her exploit in the character of an empress or something equally stately when I took her to a ball at college and Hamish still cherishes a stiff finger he got, removing her from some objectors at a mass meeting when she was a socialist. The trained nurse imitation succeeded her

autumn at the Horse Show when she was aping Mrs. Rodney Bent. However, she met Mrs. Bent's brother-in-law, Randolph, at this time and there ensued a normal career, quite natural, of characterizations. Many girls in love turn actress. Angelica was coy and cold and pensive in quite the ordinary way. She had Randy running and trotting after her about town and the Kenyons were pleased. Hamish was delighted.

"You know," he said, "a husband won't put up with some one different at breakfast every morning."

"We've put up with it," I warned him.

But the early days of the engagement passed without any dangerous symptoms. I lit the fire, myself, one afternoon while the trousseau was making. I met the girl for lunch and she looked fagged. So I took her to see Estelle Warren in "Pariahs."

Perhaps the change in her hair should have warned me. She began to arrange it in some fashion that hid her ears and presented nothing to the glance but smooth sweeps of yellow. Also her smile developed a sidelong, wistful droop. I thought it very pretty. The typhoon, of course, leapt on us at the last and worst second.

They were to be married in the country and I arrived an hour before the ceremony, went up to dress in Hamish's room and was surprised at not finding him. I was lacing my boots when he rushed in livid and silent with anger.

"You can take those things off," he managed after an evil moment, "there won't be any wedding. She's gone mad!"

He tore his gloves up, methodically, and threw them in the fireplace.

"As good a fellow as any girl could want—even if he is rich. Well, go look at her—"

"Oh," I said hopelessly, "I may as well—"

I found Angelica in a loose and lovely chamber robe, embroidered in gold threads with queer tassels. It was very familiar, in some way. The maids and Mrs. Kenyon were huddled in a corner, cheeping and sniffing.

Angelica, one arm spread on the keyboard of her piano behind her was trailing a cigarette in curves in the air. She gave me the sidelong smile.

"Now, what are you up to?" I demanded.

"Nothing. . . . But I've been awake all night. . . . thinking." Her voice paralyzed me. "And I can't go on with this. . . . I can't go through with it!— If he was poor and we had to struggle I could go on with it, then— But this won't be a marriage. . . . A sort of petted slavery—a tame cat's life—A—"

"My God," said Hamish, slamming the door, "they can hear her downstairs!"

"And he'll get sick of me," she gulped, getting a hand on her throat; "nothing to look forward to—years of it—years of it!"

"As good a fellow as a girl could want," Hamish choked. "Oh, kid, you"—

"Can't go on with it—"

"Angelica," I said, "stop acting! You've got to be married in half an hour," Hamish yelled. "She— Do you mean what you're saying, you damn little ass?"

"But—she's not acting."

Angelica had reached the point where Miss Warren sobs in the third act. I really wanted to see her do it but Hamish is practical and the strongest I know. He got hold of her wrists and began shaking Angelica so that the sob, having commenced contralto rose into a soprano squeal.

"Ham—let go—let go!"

Hamish went on shaking his sister. Her hair fluffed out of its secret fastenings and tossed about charmingly. Her great sleeves beat like the wings of copped moth. I think she tried to kick him. I was laughing too much to interfere.

"Ham! Ham—Oh, please!"

"Will you be—good, damn you?"

Angelica dropped on her knees. She said afterward that she was getting seasick. I know she was frightened.

"Oh, please, Ham! . . . I've got to dress!"

"You'd better—you pup!" he grunted, and let go.

She made the most beautiful bride I have ever seen but I have never been able to show Hamish the humor of this act. He is still suspicious and keeps waiting for an outbreak.

Indeed there have been mild spasms, but never useless, although she nearly broke down imitating a perpetual motion machine when the Red Cross started feeding troops at the stations. Her impersonation of a perfect Optimist was all that kept the Kenyons going after Hamish was announced seriously wounded at Cantigny. I gave her credit for it, the day he landed and telephoned me from Hoboken.

"Well," he said, "I suppose she's imitating a rocking horse to amuse the baby?"

"Your nephew," I stated, "is too young to be amused. She has to amuse Randy to keep him from reading the income tax."

His parents were in the South and I knew Hamish longed to see her more than anything else in the city. I told the driver to take us there and sent up

only my card. I own that I was faintly afraid Angelica might improvise a part for him. She professes that one of her teeth never recovered from her wedding day. By and by we heard her singing upstairs.

"French," said Hamish. "She doesn't think she's a vivandiere, does she?"

But he listened.

She sang, softly and graciously, an old foolish song about not going to the woods since the laurels are cut down—*"Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés."*

I knew she was singing to the baby, in her white arms, since so softly, and she turned the landing post with her head a little bent. Queer, that she came down with her hair flowing under a draped veil. It had just been washed, actually, which accounts for the gray robe. But the window behind showed through the hair and the veil and made a golden mist and her face was grave, almost sad and her eyes obscured. She did not need a circlet of tawdry flame or stupid cherubim.

Hamish gave a thick sob.

This was, I think, the best of her imitations.



THE FLORENTINE LADY

By George Rowley

BRING me the mirror Benvenuto made
Of gold and amethyst and polished jade.
And I will dress my hair so that my face
Fits like a picture in the mirror's space.

Last night, he bragged of Venice when he came . . .
Once, after Naples, it was much the same . . .
I know his ways—so well! Bring me the glass,
And I will change my hair, and let it pass. . .



CALAMITY

By John Hamilton

I

MY window was closed against the storm.
Snow flakes beat upon the panes,
So soft, so white, so lovely . . .
I opened my window an inch or two to admit a few of the beauteous
particles—
I caught cold and almost died.

II

I had shut my heart against love.
A woman, who smiled with half closed eyes, touched me with her slim
fingers,
So soft, so white, so lovely . . .
I thought: "I shall kiss this woman and go away"—
She married me.



WOMAN OF DREAM

By David Morton

Still must my heart lean toward you in the dusk,
Woman of Dream, whose heavy hair is musk
Of roses blown in some old flower time,
Whose eyes are summer, and whose lips are rhyme.
More musical than music heard at night,
Your voice drifts past me, and your image, white
And frail as lilies lidded on a stream,
Lies ever on my heart, Woman of Dream.

We have no part with time, no league with place:
Old centuries awaken in your face,
And all the opiate sweetness of the South
Stirs indolent and drowsy at your mouth. . . .
Woman of Dream, all else is dream but you:
The world is lies, and you alone are true.

THE FOREIGNER

By L. M. Hussey

I

FARINELLI was born in Naples, and before he made his escape to the United States he spent most of his time out in the Bay. He was the captain and the crew of a little sailing vessel, a clumsy example of a trawler. The boat was badly designed and a stiff breeze was a hazardous thing to manage, yet this never concerned Farinelli, who had something of an indifferent soul. He was employed by the owner to take the more adventurous variety of tourists out through the Bay to Capri, and then, with the continued favour of the gods, to bring them back again. Until the time of his flight he had successfully achieved this purpose several hundred times.

Then, through an absurd misfortune, he got into trouble with the Neapolitan police. A month or two before, he had met a young radical of some sort in a wine shop, a fellow whom he found with plenty of money, generosity and an agreeable disposition.

Farinelli, who had no concern with political ideas, understood very little of the doctrines expounded to him; but with an unconscious ear for eloquence he liked to listen to the young man's conversation; he was a person of more words than Farinelli. Then one day he was invited to attend a meeting of the radicals, and he consented from the pleasant prospect of being in the company of his new friend.

He knew nothing about the manoeuvres of the society, and was wholly ignorant of the fact that the Secret Service, having had all these people under surveillance, had determined to

arrest as many of the members as possible. He met his friend one evening in the wine shop and they set out together for the third-floor room over a restaurant, where the meetings were held.

They entered the place by way of an alley, went up a flight of back stairs, and passed into a room at the end of a dark, narrow hall after a conspiratorial series of knocks on the door. There were more than a dozen men in a very small space and they all seemed preoccupied with some extremely weighty concerns.

Farinelli was introduced; they clasped his hand eagerly and called him companion. His naive soul was pleased with the friendly warmth of this greeting.

One after another they talked, sometimes with a great degree of fervour, and he admired the ease with which most of these men composed sentences. Speech was not a facile thing with him, and for the most part he was shy and inarticulate. They produced a demijohn of sour wine and everybody was free to fill his glass out of the bottle; Farinelli drank freely with the rest.

They had all been talking together for more than an hour, when he was startled by a sudden explosive noise like the detonation of a small bomb.

He dropped his glass and turned his head quickly; he was in time to see the splintered door fall inward and in another instant the police were in the room.

The others understood the significance and the consequences of this raid, and were on their feet immediately.

While he was still seated he saw a heavy chair, flung from the opposite end of the room, strike the first uniformed intruder like a grotesque projectile; the man fell back into the arms of the one directly behind him and the two went down together. Then the fight ensued with a startling suddenness.

So far no one had concerned himself with the two windows at the end of the room, and Farinelli was the first to reach them. He only vaguely understood the meaning of the raid, but he fully apprehended the necessity of escape. His own innocence would mean nothing if he were taken by the police.

He raised the sash with an impetuous violence; the glass broke and fell in a sharp little shower over his hands. He thrust his head out and looked up and down. Overhead was a ledge, running below the roof, that he believed he could reach by standing on the sill.

He pulled his body through the window, clinging by his fingers to the window frame. Releasing his hold for a precarious second, he instantly raised his arms and by good fortune they were long enough for his hands to grip the projection. With a raised boot he pushed down the empty window-frame and placing his foot on top of it, raised himself up. He could now grasp the edge of the roof and in a moment he was on top of the house.

For a few seconds he crouched there, panting and motionless. He peered over the roof; down in the yard he could make out a small group of dark figures and from these came the reports of revolvers, with little jets of ominous flame in the blackness. Several bullets flew close to his head; he heard the high-singing notes of their passage.

For a moment he thought that he must be the target; in another instant a man's head came up over the eaves and he understood that they were firing at this second fugitive. The face rose up out of nothingness, startling like an apparition, distorted like a tormented ghost. The two stared at each

other for the briefest second. It was his young friend.

For a short space they were motionless, two prone figures on the roof, amorphous and inanimate in the darkness, like sinister drift-pieces awash on a threatening shore. His friend was the first to speak.

"Crawl back!" he whispered. "We've only a few minutes!"

They crawled on their hands and knees and the sharp cinders, loosened from the binder of tar, cut into their flesh; they were oblivious to the pain.

"I foresaw this sometime," muttered his friend. "I made plans for it. Crawl to the edge on the other side. We can drop down to the next roof. There's a window we can get in by. I think we'll have luck. . . ."

No more words passed between them. The drop to the adjoining roof was only a few feet. His friend, acquainted with the way, let himself over the edge clinging to the cornice; in a moment he disappeared through the window beneath.

Farinelli followed; now he could hear the thump of his heart underneath his coat. He lowered himself into the room and the other was waiting for him inside.

"I think we're safe here," his friend said. "We can stay here as long as we have to—a week or two if that's necessary. Why didn't I know these damn fools hit upon tonight? They certainly have descriptions of me, and probably of you too. I can get some money brought here. . . ."

Farinelli made no reply. His mind was stirring with a sullen resentment; now he was marked, like a criminal, and liable to arrest anywhere. He had done nothing, he understood nothing. His position was intolerable and incredible, yet he comprehended its grotesque and sardonic fact; he knew the police and he had no illusion that his fundamental innocence would in any way protect him. Inasmuch as he was a man who scrutinized only the primary facts of the life that came to him, never analyzing underlying causes and

motives, he was saved in these hours from a more flaming and disastrous anger. He began to accept the new conditions that were imposed upon him with a dumb and fatalistic resignation.

These two spent three weeks together in the small room. During this period Farinelli's friend elaborated a plan for flight to the United States. At first this seemed a very radical measure, but a final confession from the other man made it appear more reasonable.

"It won't pay for any of us to get caught," he said. "I had a revolver. I shot two or three of them."

The idea of emigration then took on another complexion. Farinelli, having no schemes of his own, consented to go. The money was being supplied him. He cut off his moustache, but let his beard grow. A new name and the birth certificate of a dead man were secured for him. The plan was to make their way separately to Venice and meet there.

One morning they kissed each other on the cheeks and separated. Farinelli never saw his friend again; he disappeared completely and obscurely, as a phantom might vanish out of sight; he went out into the crowd in the early hours of the day and was gone, so far as he concerned Farinelli, forever. What became of him? Farinelli never knew . . . the police . . . an unguessed, tragic accident . . . merely a change in plans? The knowledge of this fate was denied him.

He sailed in the steerage of a small transatlantic steamer. Some of his companions in the passage were honest men with their wives and their children, transparent in their aims and purposes; others, like himself, were enigmatical and unknown, false in their names, inscrutable in their goals, traversing the sea to a new land, the fathomless sea that in itself was the symbol of their sinister and incalculable exodus. They came into New York and for a time were herded together in the quarantine. Then Farinelli found himself liberated in a tumultuous and

unknown city, surrounded by an uncomprehended clamour, knowing nothing of the speech that entered into his ears, and abandoned, like flotsam in a current, to the unguessed destiny of his fortunes.

II

HE made the acquaintance of an honest fellow who had come from a little town on the Adriatic in the state of Abruzzi. He was here with his wife and a vociferous colony of small children; he worked as a labourer on the railroad.

Farinelli rented the part of a room from him and through his assistance secured a job at the same work. The two went out together early in the morning and returned after dark.

Inasmuch as Farinelli had no one to care for but himself, and no one to save for at home, he now had plenty of money. His business was to shovel up the cracked stone ballast of the tracks and level it off.

At first the nice requirements of the section boss annoyed him; later he took a certain pride in making an exact alignment of the outer edge of small stones until, looking up the track, each stone lay within a precise line, as if it had been placed there by a mathematical measurement. But essentially there was little joy in this work; often he thought of the blue transparency of the Neapolitan sky, the aquamarine Bay, the approach to the cliffs of Capri, with white breakers rolling up like intricate lace on the sun-drenched rocks. Already he was planning to go back; he waited for the opportunity of return with the illimitable patience of his unemotional heart.

The winter came, and these were his most disagreeable days. He was unused to snow, to wet, to hostile cold winds, to skies overcast. His natural taciturnity increased, he made no friends, he talked to no one, he suffered from a dumb nostalgia. But he was a reliable labourer and during this season, when repair work was at a mini-

mum, he was kept in employment clearing the tracks of snow.

March came; it rained every day, but there was the indefinable promise of better weather suggested in the air. The old work began again and the section was shifted further out of the city. His landlord moved to a little town in New Jersey and Farinelli went with him. Now they occupied a small house, an ancient frame structure, full of minute, pestilential bugs, with which they shared the building in unconcern. Here Farinelli had a room to himself.

He worked every day as usual. He thought very little about himself; he had little to say to anyone. Thick and square, like a Roman soldier, swarthy of face, with his jetty hair and his jetty eyes, he had the appearance of a brigand, he looked romantic and suggestive, the entertainer of intrigue, the enactor of obscure and unrelenting vendettas; yet his appearance lied, his simplicity was childlike.

He accepted all the new conditions of his life like a fatalist, without question, with nothing save a vague and wordless regret. He only occasionally felt the immense difference of his new environment that in such moments expressed itself to him not so much in the novelty of his physical surroundings—the appearance of streets, the character of buildings, the minutiae of customs—as in an underlying apprehension of hostility to him in all these alien people with whom he mingled.

Sometimes when groups of small boys jeered at him because he was a foreigner, when a passing man stared at him inimically, when a woman looked at him with a mingling of pity and contempt, a certain brief fear came into his heart, the fear of the unknown, the terror of incalculable and uncomprehended forces. But usually his mind was aloof from such qualms; he worked hard all day, he ate heartily in the evening, played a little while with his friend's children, helped drink a kettle of beer at bedtime, and slept through the night with a sound dreamlessness. He had very few diversions,

there were none in particular that he desired.

Farinelli enjoyed the hour of liberation at night better than any of the other moments of the day. Next to this he appreciated best the half hour at noon, when he was free to go off by himself, eat his lunch, lie flat on the ground, his back in the grass, his face in the sun. At these times he often thought of his old life.

One day in the summer, sitting beneath a tree, he had just opened his rectangular tin box and spread his lunch at his side, when he heard a step behind him. Someone stopped; there was a soft, sibilant intake of breath.

Farinelli turned; he was surprised to see a girl staring at him. Her clothes were mussed and disheveled; there was a rip in her skirt; her shoes were muddy; her yellow hair was loosened and half hung down over her neck, as if someone had recently shaken her. There were smudges of dirt on her face, which was young, childlike, and singularly devoid of expression.

She stood motionless, looking at the man in the grass blankly, like a badly cared-for image from a wax-works. Farinelli looked back at her, expecting her to speak.

"*Comme?*" he asked at last. "*Di cosa si tratta?* What you wan', Miss?"

Now she began to smile at him, coaxingly, ingratiatingly. Her white, even teeth made an ivory line between her curved lips. She put out her hand in a hesitant gesture; she withdrew it; she continued to smile.

"What you wan'?" he repeated.

She seemed to overcome an obscure reluctance, an uncomprehended fear. She moved forward swiftly and sat down beside him.

"Give me something to eat," she said.

Farinelli was surprised and shocked. He was elemental enough to understand the simple urgency of her appeal. This was a circumstance, a condition, within his comprehension and experience; at other times he had been hungry himself.

For the moment he allowed himself no questions; he was naïve enough to give action the ascendancy over curiosity. He broke off a large irregular piece of bread, selected a lump of hard cheese, put the cheese on top of the bread and handed it to her. She took it, held the bread in one hand and the cheese in the other and began to eat immediately. She said nothing and the man, forgetting about the rest of the food, sat and watched her.

Her presence and the cause of her condition were incomprehensible to him. He had very little imagination and was unable to postulate upon the mystery of her arrival, her evident hunger, her unkempt appearance, the singular innocence of her manner.

He examined the external details of her person and they told him nothing. He was a poor estimator of ages—he thought she might be between seventeen and eighteen years old. He saw that she was pretty and this pleased him. She had round, smooth cheeks, very fair, very pale. Her hair was abundant, the colour of yellow wines. Instead of the expected blue, her eyes were brown; they contrasted with the pallor of her face and the fustic brightness of her hair. She had the full lips of a child.

He examined the external details of all the bread and cheese and then he gave her what was left. She ate this too, somewhat more slowly, with less intent eagerness, pausing occasionally to smile at him. When she had finished he handed her a tin-cup full of water; she drank half the cup and then gave it back to him. Dropping her hands in her lap, she sighed with content.

"I feel better now," she said.

Farinelli knit his brows over the difficult business of talking to her in English and began to question her.

"I like to know why you here?" he asked. "Why you have nothing to eat this way?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Ah? Who are you? Where you live?"

Her mouth drooped; she twisted her lips into a grimace of helplessness; her eyes looked at him with appeal, as if in remonstrance and in pleading.

"Oh, I don't know," she said. "Please don't ask me all these things. I don't know. I'm very tired. Don't you like me?"

It was a direct question; he was suddenly regretful that he could have worried her; he hastened to answer.

"Yes, yes," he said.

Her head dropped a little to the side; she touched her cheek with her small hand in a gesture of weariness.

"I'm terribly tired," she said. "Take me home with you. I want to sleep."

Again his curiosity was mastered by the appeal of her elemental necessities. He set motionless for a moment, thinking. She looked at him trustfully, waiting for him to speak, waiting for him to act.

In the silence of the noonday he heard sharp metallic sounds not far away; the men were beginning to work again.

Suddenly he stood up, straightening his hat that had been tilted over his eyes.

"You wait," he said. "See? You understand? You stay here!"

She nodded obediently. He looked at her a moment, hesitant, not sure that she had heard him. Then he hurried off through the grass toward the railroad tracks.

He looked back over his shoulder and saw her still seated underneath the tree, her hands in her lap, her head bent forward a little, her shoulders flexed, her body motionless, her attitude one of dumb patience. Half in the shadow of the leaves, half in the gilding sunlight, she looked pitifully fragile and alone.

Farinelli ran down the short declivity to the tracks and she was lost to his sight. He approached the group of labourers quickly. The section boss was standing with his hands in his pockets, a cold pipe in his mouth, watching them.

Farinelli hurried up to him, took off

his hat, and began to talk volubly, in his own tongue.

"I mus' go this afternoon," he said. "Excuse me this time. You see, it is so necessary; it is ve-ry important. Certainly, I be on time as always to-morrow. You see, I can't stay no more today."

The boss looked at him for a moment in silence. Farinelli was a good man.

"All right," he said.

He returned his hat to his head and half running, went back the way he had come. He was uneasy lest the girl, misunderstanding his departure, should have gone away. He felt obligated to assist her. Her helplessness, whatever might be its cause, aroused his compassion.

He ran up the bank from the track and looked eagerly across the tall grass toward the tree. She was sitting where he had left her, half in the shadow, half in the sun.

III

BECAUSE her father was a man of some prominence, the disappearance of the girl had been followed by a considerable public furor. The newspapers published her pictures; private detectives search for her; the police, under accusations of inefficiency, were active.

Several theories were advanced; the most favoured had a sinisterly romantic character. It was assumed that in some way she had been enmeshed in the underworld, entrapped and enslaved, a victim of the exploiters of young girls. This hypothesis made agreeable newspaper copy.

Everyone knew the facts, so far as they were known, of her disappearance. She had recovered not long before from a severe illness and was in the habit of walking out every afternoon for the sake of exercise. One afternoon she left her home as usual, and by nightfall she had not returned. Since she was never absent in this way, inquiries were begun at once. All her acquaintances were telephoned; no one

knew anything of her whereabouts, no one had seen her.

In the morning the police were acquainted with the case; by the afternoon the newspapers published the first facts.

Several days of futile search passed and hypothetical analogies were drawn; the histories of other cases were revived; the facts connected with other young women who had vanished were recalled. As a reward, a large sum was offered for any information concerning her condition or whereabouts. This availed nothing. More than a month, a month of rumours and false hopes, passed without the slightest word of authentic information.

And then, as suddenly as she had vanished, she was discovered. It was assumed that she had passed through experiences so dreadful that they had unbalanced her. Specifically, she was sane in every way, save that she recognized no one, her father, her mother, no member of her family. In this respect her memory was gone, utterly.

But the actual fact, unknown to any person, was that she had suffered this loss of all knowledge of herself on the very afternoon of her disappearance, and it was the fact itself that accounted for her vanishing. Doubtless the sudden onslaught of this condition was a sequel of her illness, some unguessed pathological reaction of the disease upon her nervous system. Or, as such attacks sometimes are, it may have been unaccountable, an inexplicable catastrophe, an unfathomable malady.

She was walking along the street, slowly in the summer afternoon, in the full knowledge of her identity, her condition of being, her relations with the material world when, as if an unseen and sinister hand had sponged the faculty of recollection from her mind, she knew none of these things. She scarcely appreciated a change; only a vague sense of emptiness and bewilderment. She could not understand why she was out on the street; she wondered where she was going.

She paused, frowning a little, hesitating, looking about her. No reason for her immediate surroundings came to her mind. She began to walk on again, more slowly now, puzzled and speculating. A suburban trolley passed her and it occurred to her suddenly that she wanted to go out into the country. The idea satisfied and relieved her; she concluded that this had been her intention all the time.

She waited at the corner for the next car, and when it came she got on quietly and took a seat. She looked out of the open window, enjoying the motion of the car, the passing streets, and, presently, the appearance of detached houses and fields of young grain and yellow hay. She quite forgot her momentary perturbation. She rode to the end of the line and got off the car with no specific purpose.

She began to walk, passing through a suburban town to the open country. To stroll along the road delighted her; she liked the freedom of it, the sweet smell of the air, the warm sunshine. It amused her to see the little clouds of dust kicked up by her feet as she walked. She could not remember having done anything like this before; it was novel, it was agreeable.

The sun went down behind the fields and the warm twilight settled about her like a garment. She was walking much more slowly now; she was growing tired. Presently she came to an orchard full of small peach trees, and climbing the rail fence she picked some of the peaches and ate them eagerly. They did not entirely satisfy her, but no place occurred to her where food might be secured. Now it was growing dark. She sat quietly for a time, under the trees, wondering what she wanted to do.

After a time she got up and crossed through the orchard, making her way toward a clump of woods that was visible to her not far away. She found the woods dark and this frightened her a little, but at the same time the utter still of the place charmed her and she was anxious to draw in full breaths

of the pleasant air that smelt aromatically of the earth.

She followed no path, but pushed through the low underbrush, pausing now and then to disentangle her skirts from the thorns of blackberry bushes growing wild in long tenacious brambles. Presently she came to an immense hemlock that lifted itself straightly from the earth and the bushes, topping the other trees like a sentinel. All the ground around this tree was soft and matted with fallen needles, a thick pad of them, the accumulated, uninterrupted deciduary of many years. The needles yielded noiselessly under her feet; she sat down with a tired sigh. It seemed remarkable that she had come so far, that she had not noticed her immense fatigue. She lay prone on the bed of needles and in a few moments passed into sleep.

It was late in the morning when she awakened and she was aware immediately of an insistent hunger.

Now it began to trouble her that she was in the woods; surely she had some place to go, had some means of securing food. She left the hemlock tree and pushed through the brambles again and after a few minutes of walking came to the edge of the trees. The prospect opened out into a field, and across the plowed land she could see a man working. He was accompanied by a large dog and the animal, scenting her presence, came bounding through the furrows, barking. His rush frightened her and she fled back into the woods, her heart beating fast, her face blanched, regardless of the thorns and bushes. Now the dog was no longer barking, and she sat down on a fallen log, taking in her breath in quick nervous gulps.

She felt immensely alone, unaccountably deserted, in some unfathomable way left without friends or protection. She began to cry, and the tears ran down her cheeks and dropped to the ground that sucked them up eagerly as if to hoard and treasure the evidence of her distress. Then, as her eyes grew dry, she stood up again and

began walking through the woods in the direction opposite to the man and the dog.

Once more she emerged, and this time, sitting in the grass underneath a tree, she saw a man eating. She felt reassured. He would help her, he would give her food. She approached him quietly, and stood behind him a moment, looking at the pleasant sight of white bread and yellow cheese laid out beside him.

Then he turned his head and spoke to her.

IV

IN his simplicity, Farinelli regarded her as an gift of God. He accepted her advent absolutely, with scarcely a question, with little wondering. She came to him asking for food, relying on his compassion, yielding herself to his protection, and she was pretty and she gave him her smiles.

He only half apprehended certain singularities of her mind. She could not answer the inquiries he put to her; she could give him no data concerning herself; she said nothing about her past. But inasmuch as his English was quite rudimentary, the barrier of language restrained him from any ardent pursuit of her history and his own tendency to accept without argument the gifts of whatever single moment led him to pass lightly over her peculiarities. She was a pretty little woman; she looked at him with trust and affection; he was content.

That first afternoon he took her home with him and she sat quietly on a chair in the kitchen whilst he held an unusually voluble discussion with the wife of his friend. Presently they agreed upon terms for another room; three small children were shifted temporarily into the parlour and she was given possession of a small, cubical space that was entirely her own.

At this period Farinelli had no definite plans for her; his arrangements were temporary; he hoped to find out something about her. But the days

passed and he knew no more than in the first moment of greeting her. Meanwhile these two grew in intimacy.

She was always eager for his return in the evening, and after a few days he found her waiting at the corner for him. When she saw him get off the car, she smiled with the sincere delight of a child; she slipped her hand through his arm; she walked at his side. He was proud of her prettiness and touched by her pleasure. With her, he used the endearments and diminutives he had always imagined for the woman whom he should love. He called her "*tesoro mio*" and "*carina*," and spoke of her little hands, the "*manina*." She asked him to explain the meaning of these words, and so far as he was able he framed their English equivalents. She was eager to learn his language; he purchased a primer full of pictures that bore some resemblance to life with the corresponding Italian words beneath them. In the evening she sat close to him at the kitchen table and gave these words a quaint pronunciation, forming them into droll sentences that made him laugh.

At the end of the first week he went to church and gave the *padre* some money for Saint Giuseppe, whom he thanked for guiding him to America. He lost his nostalgia; for the first time he was glad of his coming.

His mind went back in retrospect to his days in Naples, to the cause of his flight, to the seeming meaninglessness of his apparent misfortune. He almost achieved some philosophical thoughts; he developed a certain wordless awe of the divine providence; he seemed to sense the foresight and the inscrutable perfection that a higher power ordained for his life. He marveled at the appointment of his destiny. The visit to church and the acknowledgment of the graciousness of his saint marked the stirring profundity of his groping thought. It was the first time he had admitted the faith since his arrival in an alien land.

After a week had gone by he became uneasy lest some claims should arise

that would take her away from him. With the passing of another week he was more assured; his superstitions gave strength and comfort to his assurance; he felt certain that she was his.

One evening as she sat near him endeavouring to shape her unused lips to the saying of strange words, he buried his fingers in her golden hair and kissed her. She returned his caress, she touched his cheeks with her soft hands, she pouted her lips for his further kisses. Her touch warmed his blood as if it communicated to him the living essence of all fragrance. He held her face close to his, and endearments passed his lips in a low continuing murmur.

"Amata! Tu sei mi' unica amore! Diletta mia! T'amo, tesoro mio, t'amo!"

It was with difficulty then that he made his wish evident to her understanding; he wanted her to marry him; at last she comprehended and like a pleased child she was acquiescent to his desire. Then, in a loud voice, he called his friend; he explained; they embraced each other. They produced a quart of red wine and drank it up together in celebration of the occasion.

Farinelli planned to take her to the city for the actual ceremony with also the additional idea that they could spend a few days there together. His friend was to go with them, and for the time they fixed an early day the following week.

Farinelli was boisterously happy; he slapped his friend on the back a dozen times; the two made a private bet as to the sex of the first child. The next day he made arrangements with his boss for a free week.

The trio took the train early in the morning and at their arrival in the station Farinelli with the girl separated from his landlord for a few hours with a subsequent meeting-place arranged. Together they walked out to the street, their arms linked. The air was warm, the sun caressed them both with the air of a gilding benediction.

Farinelli walked with his head thrown back a little, with his delight

evident in the smiles that returned constantly to his lips. For the first time he felt a comradeship and a sympathy in the crowds through which he passed; the sense of an incalculable hostility, of something vaguely inimical, of separation and contempt, passed from his apprehensions. He was glad to be here, in this city, in this land, with one of its women whom he loved close to him, touching him, listening to the words he spoke to her. His future seemed luminous, his destiny assured, his fate agreeable with delight, under the presidency of powers more astute than his divining. Every now and then he bent his head to his companion and whispered some word that brought the touching payment of her smile.

They had walked five or six blocks together; they had just crossed the street and were stepping up the curb; a heavy man lounging against a store window stared at them. His first glance at the girl surprised him; he looked at her intently, unbelieving. He had examined a dozen photographs of her when her father had first come to his agency and enlisted his assistance.

Then he turned his eyes quickly to Farinelli and her companionship with a foreigner convinced him. This must be the man responsible. They passed him; they had gone on a dozen yards or more before he straightened his body, clapped his hand to his hip to assure himself, and then strode after them.

He walked past the two and stared at the girl's profile for further assurance. No, he felt no doubt whatever. He stopped suddenly, turned around, and confronted Farinelli. The latter, surprised, unexpectant of such a manoeuvre from one whom he had not even noticed, almost bumped into him. He flushed angrily.

"What you wan'?" he asked.

The detective grasped the girl's arm; she shrank from his touch. He thrust his hand down into his back pocket.

"Stand out there!" he demanded. "And by God, don't try to get away!"

Don't try any games! Your's are done!"

The sight of the stranger seizing the arm of his beloved enraged Farinelli. He paused for no further inquiry. He lurched forward with an astonishing swiftness and agility, striking the face of the man in front of him with both his closed fists. He seized him about the body, he threw all his weight upon him; the two went down to the pavement together. A crowd closed in at once.

"Get him off!" screamed the detective. "That's the Farnum girl! look at her! I've got the man!"

Further utterance was impossible to him. Farinelli, his tensed muscles oblivious to the hands that sought a futile grip at his throat, seized the head of his antagonist in his enraged grasp as the preliminary of beating it on the pavement. Three or four men in the crowd stared at the terrified girl.

"The Farnum girl!" somebody cried. "Yes, look at her! That's her! Get the foreigner on top! The foreigner!"

"The foreigner! see; it's the foreigner!"

There was a brutal and appalling rush for Farinelli. In an instant he was torn away from his antagonist; a

dozen new men, unknown to him as the first, unfathomable in their ferocity, attacked him. From the mob incomprehensible threats beat into his ears like the malign and savage turmoil of an inferno.

Madly, insanely, in a final desperation, with all the fury of his young strength, he sought to liberate himself from the enraged assailments that gyrated about him. For a second he was erect, the vortex of a maelstrom. In that moment, as in the swift vision of a drowning man, his old beliefs in this people's hatred and hostility, in their grotesque enmity, in their inscrutable malignity, came back to him in a heart-rending revelation.

With the passing of another instant he was thrown to the pavement; they beat his face with an unleached savagery; they tore at his motionless hands; they kicked his unresistant body. When the police clubbed back the mob he lay tragically inert, a foreigner, unrecognizable, unknown. The girl, amazed, terrified, supported by a tall policeman, stared down at him.

In the morgue no one was ever able to identify his body, but the case aroused a brief public agitation against criminal aliens.



A WOMAN'S heart is like a palimpsest. After the last man has written upon it you can still discern faint traces of her first lover's imprint.



TRAGEDY: To be a night-blooming cereus, which blossoms only once a year, and to be all alone that night!



A WEDDING ring is woman's *croix de guerre*.



THE GARGOYLE

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

"I SAY, don't you feel silly?"

He had meant to whisper but his vocal cords had played him false. He must have bellowed. The words seemed to echo and re-echo through the silent room.

The woman who sat beside him on the couch responded sweetly, "I am so glad to hear your voice. I was beginning to feel hysterical."

"So was I," he agreed. "What would people have said if we'd set up a giggle? I snort when I laugh, and that's so vulgar."

"This is a test of one's nerves," she said. "It's much more trying than a funeral."

He shifted his position and readjusted the pillow at his back.

"You are fidgetting," she protested. "You mustn't. If you don't stay perfectly still you will be a wreck at the end of an hour."

"This couch is so uncomfortable," he explained. "The springs don't work."

"They work beautifully over here," she replied. "You *are* fidgetting; don't deny it."

"I think I'll lie down flat on the floor," he threatened. "We're all blind; nobody would see me. But you must promise not to peek."

"I don't hear a sound," he announced suddenly. "Perhaps we are the only ones here. You don't suppose we've been forgotten, do you? It may be the middle of the night."

"We haven't been here fifteen minutes. Other people have enough self-control to keep quiet." She was stern.

"You have no imagination," he com-

plained. "Or else you've got your eyes wide open. That would be dishonest."

He raised his right eye-lid a trifle and peered at his companion. He could see very little, except that she hastily snatched a handkerchief from her lap and covered the upper part of her face.

"Aren't you ashamed?" He spoke in hurt tones.

"I *knew* you were spying," she returned.

They laughed. His lid dropped back into position. They sighed.

"Will it never end?" She was plaintive.

"This business gives me the queerest sensations," he mused. "I can't believe I'm still inside my body. I seem to be floating around without it. Wouldn't it be terrible if I never found it again? Clothes are so awfully expensive today; I shouldn't like to lose this new suit."

"What was that sound?" She interrupted his flight of fancy.

"I'm afraid I yawned. I'm awfully sorry." He was contrite.

"Are there really other people in this room?" he asked.

"How should I know?"

"Oh, come, you *did* peek. Please tell me."

"The room is full," she let him know. "What must they think of us?"

"I don't care." He chuckled. "I think we're very amusing."

"We are certainly ridiculous," she said.

"Do you know, I have never acted like this before?" His voice betrayed bewilderment. "I can't account for it. In another minute I may find myself

proposing; and it is possible you're an adventuress."

"Adventuresses often have weak eyes." She was non-committal.

"I wonder if this stuff could make a man drunk," he ruminated.

"I haven't a doubt of it," she replied.

"I hope you'll forgive me," he pleaded. "I'm not always such an ass."

"We both have much to forgive," she assured him.

The sound of approaching footsteps brought them a pause. The man heard a polite whisper, followed by a creak from the couch. His companion had evidently risen.

"*A bientôt*," she murmured and was gone.

He smiled contentedly and settled back once more in his corner. Stretching his legs straight out in front of him, he yawned.

The next moment, it seemed, he was roused by a tap on the shoulder.

"The drops have been in your eyes for over an hour. Would you please step into the office?" said a voice.

He stared up in the direction the sound had come from and made out a white-clad figure.

"Have I been asleep?" he asked.

The nurse smiled at him through the yellow haze that enveloped everything.

"Stupid of me!" he exclaimed, and followed meekly in her wake.

II

THE man broke into a broad grin at the moment when the oculist's eye was glaring into his own from a distance of about a quarter of an inch. He had caught the sound of the woman's voice.

"Very well," she was saying, "next Tuesday at eleven."

"Thank you, Miss Delano," responded the nurse.

The next morning he called her. He had ignored the telephone directory.

"Of course," he had reflected, "a woman with such a well-bred voice would never have her number listed."

Central threatened to be stubborn.

"We have strict orders," she protested.

"But this is a matter of life or death," he urged melodramatically.

Central yielded.

His 'Good morning, Miss Delano,' was rewarded by a laugh from the other end of the wire.

"Why have you trapped me like this?" she said. "Things went quite far enough yesterday. I should never have acted so if I'd thought—"

"You knew I was going to keep after you," he returned.

"How rude! But I *was* brazen; I suppose I must abide by the consequences."

"On the contrary, you were kind," he corrected her. "I was scared to death. You soothed me and before I knew it I was having a wonderful time."

"Don't gloss things over, please," she said. "It was a disgraceful pick-up, nothing more."

"Lay it to the belladonna," he suggested.

"I have been trying to, but my conscience won't hear of such an excuse. It is sticking pins in me at this instant. I must ring off."

"Oh, no!" He was ardent.

She relented.

"Are your eyes beyond repair?" she asked.

He settled down for a long chat. "My sight is perfect," he said. "I could read every letter on the placard with both eyes. It was most humiliating."

"And you're not to wear glasses?" She seemed anxious.

"Only to read with; and I never read."

"I am to wear spectacles all the time," she complained. "I am sorry I consulted the wretched man. I might have gone blind so gracefully."

"It's better to be blind than spectacle," he agreed. "Don't wear them."

"But nothing is so bad as to feel you've wasted money. I must put them on and go about hating myself till I die."

"Sometimes spectacles are becom-

ing," he ventured, in the hope of consoling her.

"Yes, particularly with a low-cut gown," she replied.

"Let me see you with them on," he said. "I will be frank."

"Thank you, I prefer to remain only a voice, so far as you are concerned."

"Oh, come, are you going to make this a disembodied courtship?" he pleaded.

"Of course." Then "No!" She caught herself up. "I mean to end things *now*. You mustn't call me again."

"Very well." He laughed.

For reply, she hung up the receiver.

III

FOR over a month they talked to each other every day. The conversations became more and more intimate and of ever-increasing length. They argued over politics and music; they discussed marriage and divorce. They even wrangled about dying: he was afraid to die, but wanted a smashing big funeral; she considered it ridiculous to have fears on the subject and vulgar to be buried with pomp.

Then they fell ill at the same time. He kept to his bed five days; she did not get up for a week.

"I think it was a sign from above," he insisted. "We should get married."

"Nonsense!" she returned. "Tuesday was stormy and cold. You rode and I shopped. Neither of us should have expected to be well on Wednesday."

"I was all right in forty-eight hours," he confessed; "but it was so jolly to lie in bed and talk to you all day."

"You are sending too many flowers," she reminded him; "the house won't hold any more."

"When am I to see you?" he kept asking. "You are like sweet Echo, sweetest nymph—and all that."

"I thought you never read?"

"I learned that by heart in prep school." He was unabashed. "I don't remember any more of it; those four

words stuck somehow." He returned to the attack. "When am I to see you?"

"I don't know," she parried. "I am content."

"You can't hold me off much longer," he said. "I'm planning to spend my days on your sidewalk; and the first time you come out I will pounce."

"You might have to wait a week," she replied. "I very seldom go anywhere, now the opera is over."

"If I asked you to marry me, what should you say?"

"I don't propose to commit myself before you ask." She laughed. "That is unscrupulous, isn't it? Now you have no chance of escape."

"Good!" He took the cue. "Will you marry me?"

"I can't accept you until I know more about you. You may be disreputable."

"But I haven't time," he said; "I'm at the telephone so much, you know."

"Well," she returned, "I promise to think it over."

One morning she announced, "I leave New York next week for the summer."

His betrayal of disappointment was wafted to her over the wire. It sounded like a wheeze, so distorted had it become in transit. When it left his mouth it was a beautiful sigh.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To Newport. My sister has a house there."

Another wheeze, just like the first, reached her. He had sighed again; but this second exhalation of breath had been of a different sort from the first. If the telephone in his study had been a trumpet, the air would have vibrated with a blast of triumph. A telephone is the poorest instrument conceivable for the transmission of subtly expressed emotion.

"How damned nice!" he cried. "I always spend the summer months in Newport. You can't escape me there. If you're human, you swim and play tennis and eat; and we all do those things in concert at Newport."

"I shall be fortunate if I get there

alive and sane," she said. "It is going to be a terrible train-trip."

"Why? It's not so bad, only a little tedious."

"You don't understand," Her voice held the note of tragedy. "My sister's baby and nurse are going with me. If the child were a girl, I shouldn't mind; but it's a boy and of course fretful and restless."

"What an imposition!" he exclaimed. "I shouldn't do it, if I were you. Is the baby delicate? It might die."

"No, it is healthy enough, but very ill-mannered. Oh, dear," she wailed, "I don't like babies."

"Neither do I." He stoutly supported her.

"My sister has appendicitis," she explained. "She can't be moved yet, but feels the infant has had enough of New York. Nobody is to blame; it's just unfortunate, that's all."

"When do you leave?" he asked.

"On Tuesday next."

"Please call on me, if there's anything I can do," he begged, as if the situation might develop complications that nobody but a man of strength and foresight could tackle.

IV

HE had planned to stay in New York at least a fortnight longer; but after all, he decided, Newport *did* beckon. He had been growing restless, he told himself. Besides, the chivalrous thing beyond question would be to see the poor girl safely through her ordeal. He therefore wired Hill-Top to have his rooms ready on the following Tuesday night. Meanwhile, he continued to call Miss Delano every day.

"When are you moving to Newport?" she asked once.

"I can't quite make up my mind," he lied. "Some time before the end of June, anyhow. Will you write me every day? Or shall we wire each other?"

"But I don't know your address; I don't even know your name," she said.

He could tell by the way she spoke that she was curious.

"That's true," he said, and let the subject drop.

Tuesday at a quarter before one he boarded the train in the Grand Central. "They would never be able to get off on the ten o'clock," he had reflected. "They'll be on this."

The moment he entered the drawing-room he caught sight of a frothy bundle on a trained nurse's lap. A woman with her back to him was bending over the baby and anxiously examining it, as if on the hunt for symptoms.

"That's she," he murmured. "Poor girl!"

He turned to his man.

"I am going to sit in number twenty-one," he explained, pointing out the chair directly across the aisle from Miss Delano's. "Arrange it with the porter, will you?"

He slipped into place without a sound and swinging his chair about proceeded to peer through the window opposite. He did it skilfully; one would have thought his gaze went straight over Miss Delano's head and rested on the throng outside. As a matter of fact, his examination of the girl was an exhaustive one.

Before the train started, he had completed his scrutiny and had found there was but one epithet that adequately described her. She was—ugly.

"What a shame! What a shame!" he said to himself over and over again.

She was extremely thin, almost wizened. Her features seemed at odds with each other; they failed to make up the conventional pattern of the human face. Furthermore, she indulged, every few minutes, in the queerest, most eccentric squint imaginable. It was disconcerting.

They had reached Stamford before he had conquered his chagrin sufficiently to speak.

"Here I am, you see," he announced.

She frowned and winked nervously at him.

"I—beg—your—pardon?" she faltered.

It was obvious she recognized his voice.

"Yes," he went on. "I got a hasty summons. I had to jump on the first train that pulled out."

"Fancy getting a *summons* to Newport," she replied. "Such things don't occur. You are a shameless man."

A smile brought all her irregular features into play and lent them a certain charm. She spoiled the effect by a squint.

He turned his eyes to the baby.

"It's a splendid fellow," he remarked. "So quiet and sportsmanlike."

The infant bubbled blandly in his direction.

"Now that you've run me down," said Miss Delano, "confess you are sorry. You see, I am—ugly."

He felt himself getting red as he protested, "How absurd!"

"I shouldn't have said that," she returned. "It embarrasses you."

She gave him a droll smile; but he had already caught a note of resignation, a hint of bitterness, in her voice. She had read his disappointment.

He began to hate himself for his clumsiness and to admire the woman for her courage and fine irony. He realized with delight, as he returned the smile, that he was liking her better than ever.

"It's going to be a wonderful summer," he remarked.

His enthusiasm was genuine; there was no longer any restraint in his manner.

Within fifteen minutes, the two were gossiping and chatting at a furious rate. He watched every gesture she made and mentally set each down as fascinating. The charm of her conversation was heightened by the accompanying squints and grimaces. She was grotesque; yes, she was ugly; but she was none the less absorbing for that.

Suddenly they were startled by a scream near at hand. The baby had awakened from a dreamless sleep. He had apparently found not by any means to his taste the world upon which he opened his eyes. Being much refreshed by slumber, he was setting to work to voice his complaint again dirt and noise.

The nurse, quite unconcerned, prepared for the fray.

"I had forgotten him!" cried Miss Delano.

"I had forgotten there *were* babies—or anything like that—in the world," replied the man.

The infant lay still for a time and contented himself with yelling; it was evident he was husbanding his strength. If the purpose of the outburst were to worry Miss Delano, it was succeeding gloriously.

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" she quavered.

The nurse reassured her.

"This is nothing, Miss Delano," she said. "Don't be frightened. He acts this way every day of his life."

Miss Delano gave her nephew a few ineffectual pats and sighed her relief.

"I *was* frightened for a moment," she admitted.

The baby must have heard; rage at his nurse's infamous betrayal of him got the better of discretion. All his resources were called into action. He would show them this was no ordinary occasion; he would precipitate a crisis if it killed him. He proceeded to kick and struggle, to shriek and bounce about. By this means he succeeded in eliciting a look of vague terror from his aunt. Then he played his trump card.

"What shall we do?" cried Miss Delano and turned to the man in horror.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed. "he's holding his breath."

Even the nurse began to lose her presence of mind. The child, its face already of an apoplectic hue, seemed in the grip of a paroxysm. If the truth be told, he had let his love of a dramatic coup carry him too far. He had lost his lusty breath and was finding it difficult to recover it.

"We are slowing down. Where are we?" gasped Miss Delano.

The man plunged to a window. "Kingston!"

"The child must have some air." Miss Delano started for the door, grasping the nurse by the shoulder as

she ran and dragging her and the baby along.

The train gave a jolt and stopped.

In a moment, the two women and the man were striding up and down the plank-walk outside the station, their eyes fixed in feverish anxiety on the baby in the nurse's arms.

While they still watched and trembled, the locomotive shook itself and tooted a warning.

The infant hiccoughed loudly; the crisis was past.

"Thank God!" said the man in fervent tones.

But the train had begun to move and, as he looked on in bewilderment, sped away with a clatter that sounded like a burst of Gargantuan mirth.

V

"THERE go our bags," cried Miss Delano. "And the child's medicine chest is in one of them."

"My man is wonderful," he replied. "He will see to the luggage. That's not what bothers me."

She got the ominous sound.

"What *does* bother you?" she asked.

"That's the last train for Newport today," he said. "I'm afraid you'll have to stay here at the station while I scare up quarters for the night."

"How ghastly!" She shivered.

"Don't worry." He gave her an encouraging smile. "I'll find something."

He returned in half an hour. The two women were sitting on a truck and swinging their heels disconsolately. The baby, fast asleep, smiled. The expression on his round face was positively ribald; at least, so Miss Delano judged it.

"I've got just the place for you," the man called out as he hurried up to them. "Two big rooms in a farmhouse. The morning sun pours into them, the woman says; and of course there'll be quarts of cream for breakfast."

"You *are* kind," Miss Delano almost whimpered. "I have never *wanted* to die until today. It would be such a

satisfaction first to murder that baby. See it gloat!" she cried.

"Don't be so down," he protested. "I think it's a lark."

"A lark!" She groaned.

"Supper's ready," he went on. "I looked into the dining-room on my way out. Everything will be delicious, I'm sure."

"Then we're not to eat in the kitchen?" She brightened. "Won't you join us? I shall see that little Reggie eats his dinner upstairs."

"I was waiting for an invitation," he admitted. "They don't serve food at my farmhouse."

"You've found a place for yourself, too? I am so glad."

"Oh, I have found the most capital place. Tonight I sleep in a feather-bed—"

"Epic, homicidal, six feet thick," she supplied, and laughed shamelessly at her own pleasantry.

"I am beginning to feel better," she said.

After supper, the nurse returned to her imperious charge; Miss Delano and the man went into the ridiculous sitting-room.

"I shan't stay long," he said—"just a few minutes. That is, until you've accepted me. You *are* going to marry me, aren't you? You'd better, even if you don't love me. We're hopelessly compromised."

She nodded a sage agreement. "Yes, I suppose there is no way out of it." She laughed. "You are absurd. Don't you know I've had designs on you from the first?"

He sat down beside her on the couch with a thump and grasped both her hands.

"These springs don't work either," he said. "Isn't it jolly?"

"It isn't right." She shook her head at the injustice of it all. "You are handsome and sweet; I am ugly and *so* cross."

His only answer was a kiss on her queer, crooked mouth.

"I wouldn't let you see me until we

were old friends," she went on. "The whole wicked scheme occurred to me that very first day at the oculist's. I peeked constantly; I saw how beautiful you were. Men *do* run away from me; I was determined you shouldn't."

As he listened, he couldn't but wonder if he should ever have appreciated her if he had not come to love her wit and her voice before he had stood the shock of her physical peculiarities. He was finding something tonic now in her strangeness. What if he had known nothing about her before meeting her face to face? Would he not have thought her weird, perhaps too bizarre to be sane? Would he not have fled in amazement?

"I declare, she's a ripping, oh, an exquisite gargoyle," he told himself.

"How terrified I've been at the

thought of our first meeting!" She shut her eyes at the recollection. "I knew you would be on the train today, of course; you didn't fool me the least bit. I left off my glasses on purpose; even you would have taken to your heels if I had worn them. As it was, I nearly lost you that first terrible minute."

"My God, but you *are* unscrupulous!" He laughed. "You didn't stick a pin in little Reggie, did you?"

"No, the sweet child seems to have felt instinctively that I *must* I be compromised. I suppose even babies have a dread of maiden aunts."

"Tell me," he said, "do the spectacles correct that trick?" She had just squinted adorably.

"Yes," she admitted.

"Then for heaven's sake throw them on the ash-heap," he cried.



APPEAL

By Dorothy Yawger

I HAVE always laughed at women who lose their looks and their freedom for red, wailing mites of humanity. But today at the Red Cross, I bathed a baby for the first time and I tingle still at the memory—the satiny pink body that slid from my hands as I stretched unaccustomed fingers along the wee back; the tiny crumpled fists that beat aimlessly against me; the smooth round head that lolled back as the soft mouth puckered into bubbly gurgles; the pudgy dimpled feet that churned the water into frothy waves and kicked the soap from my fingers; the final dry-pattings and powderings as the little body rolled in gleeful freedom; and, best of all, the feel of the warm blanketed little form cuddled to me as I rocked it to sleep.

These things linger in my memory. I like to think of them. I shall speak to my husband. Perhaps I was wrong.



THE presents of men often account for the pasts of women.

CIRCE

By Louise de Salis

SHE was a plain looking woman who had neither fascination nor charm. But she had all the men. And the pretty women wondered and wondered.

Until one pretty woman, bolder than the rest, hid in the plain looking woman's house.

To watch her tactics.

She heard the plain looking woman tell her maid that she was expecting two visitors that evening. One at nine o'clock and the other at ten o'clock.

And the pretty woman waited impatiently to see the preparations of the plain looking woman.

What kind of gown she wore!

What perfume she used!

Where was the great allure!

To the pretty woman's great astonishment the plain looking woman did nothing, not even changing the gown she was wearing, which was unbecoming to her.

And no perfume!

There were no rose-colored shades in the boudoir.

And no flattering chaise-longue.

The pretty woman grew more and more bewildered.

* * *

The first visitor arrived. A big raw-boned *gauche* man, who had made his money in hides.

The plain looking woman asked his advice on the re-decoration of her rooms, and told him what a wonderful sense of artistic values he possessed. He went away beaming with self-satisfaction.

The second caller was a thin under-sized man, whose mural decorations had made him famous.

She spoke of her great admiration of clean-cut men whose force was hidden but nevertheless felt, and her dislike of *avouirdupois*.

* * *

The pretty woman crept quietly away, wondering no longer.



IT is a great thing to go through life pursuing one's ideal—it is a greater thing to find one's ideal—it is the greatest of all things to know what to do with one's ideal when one has found it.



LOGIC: An excellent weapon for proving your opponent is in the wrong when you know he is right.



RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

Mind, Your Own Business.—Woman, with exception so rare that it is negligible, admires intelligence in man only in so far as this intelligence is confined to his dealings and enterprises with other men in the world of men. She has a disrelish for the man who is intelligent in her own presence, in his relations with her. She likes to know that he is intelligent, but indirectly, at second-hand. The man who exercises his intelligence in the presence of a woman may gain a friend or a wife, but never a sweetheart.

§ 2

The Lure of the City.—One of the unexpected by-products of the current rage for prohibition, vice-crusading and other such Puritanical barbarities will probably be an appreciable slackening in the present movement of yokels toward the large cities. The thing that attracted the peasant youth to our gaudy Sodoms and Ninevehs in the late past was not, as sociologists have always assumed, the prospect of less work and more money. The country boy, in point of fact—that is, the average country boy, the normal country boy,—had to work quite as hard in the city as he ever worked in the country, and his wages were anything but princely. Unequipped with a city trade, unprotected by a union, and so forced into competition with the lowest types of foreign labor, he had to be content with monotonous, uninspiring and badly-paid jobs. He did not become a stockbroker, or even a plumber; he became a car conductor, a porter or a wagon-

driver. And it took him many years to escape from that sordid fate, for the city boy, with a better education and better connections, was always a lap or two ahead of him. The notion that yokels always succeed in the cities is a great delusion. The overwhelming majority of our rich men are city-born and city-bred. And the overwhelming majority of our elderly motormen, forlorn corner grocerymen, neighborhood carpenters and other such blank cartridges are country-bred.

No, it was not money that lured the adolescent agriculturalist to the cities, but the gay life. What he dreamed of was a more spacious and gaudy existence than the farm could offer—an existence crowded with intriguing and usually unlawful recreations. A few old farmers may have come in now and then to buy gold bricks or to hear the current Henry Ward Beechers, but these oldsters were mere trippers—they never thought of settling down—the very thought of it would have appalled them. The actual settlers were all young, and what brought them on was less an economic impulse than an æsthetic one. They wanted to live magnificently, to taste the sweets that drummers talked of, to sample the refined divertissements described in such works as "The Confessions of an Actress," "Night Life in Chicago" and "What Every Young Husband Should Know." Specifically, they yearned for a semester or two in the theaters, the saloons and the bordellos—particularly the saloons and bordellos. It was this gorgeous bait that dragged them out of their barn-yards. It was this bait that landed a select few in Wall Street and

the United States Senate—and millions on the front seats of trolley-cars, delivery-wagons and ash-carts.

But now Puritanism eats the bait. In all our great cities the public stews are closed, and the lamentable irregularities they catered to are thrown upon an individual initiative that is quite beyond the talents and enterprise of a plough-hand. In a few months the saloons will close too, and alcoholism will sink to what it is in the country—a furtive sucking of jugs behind the door. Only the theater remains—and already the theater loses its old lavish devilishness. True enough, it still deals in pornography, but that pornography becomes exclusive and even esoteric: a yokel could not understand the higher farce, nor could he afford to pay for a seat at a modern leg-show. The cheap burlesque house of other days is now incurably moral; I saw a burlesque lately that was almost a dramatization of a wall-card by Dr. Frank Crane. There remains the movie, but the peasant needn't come to the city to see movies—there is one in every village.

What survives, then, of the old lure? What sane youth, comfortably housed on a farm, with Theda Bara performing at the nearest cross-roads, wheat at \$2.25 a bushel and milkers getting \$75 a month and board—what jejune rustic, not downright imbecile, itches for the city today?

§ 3

On Friendship.—The chief rock upon which a lasting friendship rests is a strong mutual belief in the same general fallacies and falsehoods.

§ 4

Conservation.—The man who boasts that he habitually tells the truth is simply a man with no respect for the truth. It is not a thing to be thrown about loosely, like small change. On the contrary, it is something to be cherished and hoarded, and disbursed only when absolutely necessary. The smallest atom of truth represents some man's bitter

toil and agony; for every ponderable chunk of it there is a brave truth-seeker's grave upon some lonely ash-dump and a soul roasting in hell.

§ 5

Trivia.—How little it takes to make the beautiful ridiculous: two flies engaged in amour on the nose of the finest Rembrandt . . . Washington's farewell to his men read aloud by a veteran of the Home Guard of 1917-18 . . . a lovely woman engaging an asparagus . . .

§ 6

Exit Papa.—It is amazing that the Sunday editors of the yellow journals have not yet discovered Prof. Dr. Jacques Loeb's "The Organism as a Whole From a Physicochemical Viewpoint." It is a frightfully tedious book—the learned biologist, indeed, is almost as bad a writer as Prof. Dr. Thorstein Veblen—but in it there is some stuff that, properly scared up and made idiotic, would manufacture more circulation than a new Thaw case. For what Dr. Loeb announces, clawed into English, is simply this: that paternity is supererogation—that the female vertebrate may become a mother without the advice and consent of the male. Beginning with fish, he has proceeded up the scale to frogs—and now his laboratory is full of bull-frogs who never had any papa. They are quite normal bull-frogs; they leap and croak like their more orthodox step-brothers; and yet the eggs from which they hatched were never fertilized, save by the laborious professor's unromantic chemicals and darning-needles.

So far, I believe, he has not proceeded beyond the *Ranidæ*, but further progress is a mere matter of perfecting the technique. The principle of the thing is established; the fact of artificial parthogenesis is above dispute. Soon or late some anarchist at the Rockefeller Institute will begin producing fatherless chickens, and then cats, and then colts, and finally, no doubt, Presbyterians. There is no theoretical impedi-

ment; it is all a matter of devising mechanical ways and means. Once worked out, imagine the effect of the innovation upon our domestic institutions, upon the birth-rate, upon property, upon the whole of civilization! Dr. Loeb carefully avoids the subject; he makes no forecasts; he is obviously eager to evade public interest. But suppose some less conscientious investigator takes up the business where he has stopped?

§ 7

Apparatus Belli.—The most loyal and faithful woman indulges her imagination in a hypothetical liaison whenever she dons a new street frock for the first time.

§ 8

The Sinister Art.—The art of criticism, as it is practised by college professors and other such dunderheads, almost always resolves itself into a mere labeling and pigeon-holing. Everything must fit into a category. This novelist, it appears, is a realist—his publisher's clerk has said so on the slip-cover of his last novel. *Ergo*, if he injects some romance into his next one it is out of key, and hence accursed. Bernard Shaw puzzles all of them. He mingles farce and melodrama, satire and tragedy, and so they come to the conclusion that he must be joking. A work of art, like a bulldog, must run true to form; its spots must be of the right shape and they must be in the right place. This is the Polonius school of criticism. One wonders, incidentally, which of his famous categories Polonius would have chosen for Anatole France's "The Revolt of the Angels," or Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

§ 9

On Religion.—The finest of all religions, west of the Orient, is the Catholic. It brings its God closer to earth, nearer to its people, than any other.

The Methodist God is a vague super-Anthony Comstock; the Presbyterian God a vague super-Colonel House; the Jewish God a vague super-Schiff; the Catholic God a simple, kindly, forgiving, generous, beautiful and very gentle and human old man. My own religion, such as it is, changes with the turn of the years: it is the religion of the girl I happen at the time to love. But when I grow too old for love, I shall become a member of the great and gorgeous Church of Rome.

§ 10

Efficiency as Charm.—The most steadily attractive of all human qualities is competence. One invariably admires a man who is good at his trade, whatever it may be—who understands its technic thoroughly, and surmounts its difficulties with ease, and gets substantial rewards for his labors, and is respected by his rivals. And in precisely the same way one admires a woman who, in a business-like and sure-handed way, has gone out and got herself a good husband, and trained him to be grateful for her condescension, and so made herself secure.

§ 11

From the Note-Book of an Observer of Parades.—Why is it that in every parade I have ever seen the floats depicting spiritual allegories are always drawn by brewery-wagon horses?

§ 12

Under the Belt.—The Freudians, in ascribing all the nauseous manifestations of Puritanism to a suppressed sexuality, probably err doubly. On the one hand, they are wrong in assuming that the Puritan is actually the vestal he pretends to be, and on the other hand, they overlook certain more likely (if less romantic) causes. One of these lurks and does its evil work along the digestive tract, between the taste-buds

and the pylorus. In other words, the Puritan is a fellow who feeds badly, and who suffers from it damnably. This suffering transforms itself, by the usual moral process, into hatred of the man who is free from it. All the rest of Puritanism is grounded upon that hatred. Take it away and everything else would disappear, from prohibition to vice-crusading, and from the doctrine that any woman who smokes cigarettes is ready for the fatal eyewink to the doctrine that whoever reads Rabelais will go to hell.

The explanation of such loathsome phenomena as Jonathan Edwards is to be found in the infernal cooking of New England, which is still the worst in the world. The early Puritans, even when they made a feast, feasted upon unappetizing and indigestible food—parched corn, dried beans, codfish, chicory coffee, black-strap molasses, soggy pies, fresh game, clams without butter, hard bread. Their chief delicacy, after venison, was turkey, and they invented the atrocity of roasting it. To this day that atrocity disfigures American cookery. Imagine roasting a fowl that is already as dry as tinder! Only in Maryland, where a few good cooks still linger, is it served properly. There they do not roast it, but boil it, and then serve it with a thick, creamy oyster-sauce. The difference is like that between perfectly broiled tenderloin and fried chuck steak. More remotely, letting metabolism intervene, it is the difference between a gentleman and a blue-nose.

The Puritan suspicion of wine has an obvious origin. One cannot drink wine with garbage: one must have decent food with it. Imagine employing a rich old Burgundy to wash down baked beans and apple pie! Or a delicate white wine, say from the Moselle, to chase salt cod! With such gross victuals the system demands well water—and plenty of it. The gullet must be flooded to get rid of the abhorrent débris, else even a Puritan would gag. The stomach must be helped to dispose of the stuff as quickly as pos-

sible. Add a handful of Glauber's salts, in God's name. A glass of wine, emptied into such a kitchen-midden, would turn into vinegar at once.

But the bad food he eats explains more than the Puritan's distrust of wine: it explains his whole ethic. A man engaged in digesting such things as beans and codfish is necessarily a man in extreme physical discomfort, and so he is a man who regards the world with a saturnine and sinister eye. His neighbor, happier, arouses his envy, and then his hatred. He is ready for indignation, which is the mother of morality. It is but a step to active measures. Ask him to join some idiotic crusade or other, tempt him to harass and punish his neighbor, and he will infallibly do it. And by exactly the same token the man with a sound meal under his belt, washed down with respectable liquors, will *not* do it.

The salvation of the Puritan, now fast becoming a stench to civilization, lies in leading him to eat better food. A hundred thousand competent cooks, turned loose in the United States, would dispose of prohibition in a year, and with it of all the other obscene crazes that now inflame the yokelry. I do not speak theoretically, but by the book. Who has not seen the transformation of an American Puritan in Paris, deposited there by the chances of travel—the gradual bleaching of the blue nose, the timorous appearance of civilized instincts, the final emergence of a fellow almost as decent and amiable as an Italian barber or a French hack-driver? The cause of the phenomenon is plain. It is simply impossible, in France, to get food bad enough to keep a Puritan liver in eruption. Such refuse is utterly unknown to French cookery; to concoct it would be beyond the talents of even the worst French cook.

More than once I have personally witnessed the process of transformation. I well remember a Yale professor in a little hotel near the Opéra, just arrived from Cherbourg. He spent his first morning hunting for a dish of

some abominable American breakfast-food or other—the leavings of a mule stable. Unable to find it, he was forced to content himself with a plate of French *croissants*. For second breakfast he had a piece of sole, capitally done. At dinner that evening he sat down to the first truly civilized meal of his life, with a bottle of sound Côte Rôtie to wash it down. In five days he was in a sort of trance—a quite new man, discovering the beauty of the world, unloading his old fears and qualms, sweating out his theology from every pore, sniffing the sweet air of Christendom. In two weeks, to a day, I met him at St. Cloud, lunching with a Cook's tour schoolmarm from Paterson, N. J. They clinked glasses. They kissed. And it was Sunday afternoon!

§ 13

The American Credo II.—Additional articles in the American credo:

1. That what is contained in the pitcher on the speakers' platform is always ice-water.

2. That all Senators from Texas wear sombreros, chew tobacco, expectorate profusely, and frequently employ the word "maverick."

3. That the meters on taxicabs are covertly manipulated by the chauffeurs by means of wires hidden under the latter's seats.

4. That Lillian Russell is as beautiful today as she was thirty-five years ago.

5. That, when shaving on a railway train, a man invariably cuts himself.

6. That the male Spaniard is generally a handsome, flashing-eyed fellow, possessed of fiery temper.

7. That after drinking a glass of absinthe one has peculiar hallucinations and nightmares.

8. That since the Indians were never bald, baldness comes from wearing tight hats.

9. That all wine-agents are very loose men.

10. That the editor of a woman's magazine is always a lizzie.

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11. That a man is always a much heartier eater than a woman.

12. That all the girls in Mr. Ziegfeld's "Follies" are extraordinarily seductive, and that at least 40 head of bank cashiers are annually guilty of tapping the till in order to buy them diamonds and Russian sables.

13. That a college sophomore is always a complete ignoramus.

14. That rubbers in wet weather are a preventive of colds.

15. That if one eats oysters in a month not containing an "r," one is certain to get ptomaine poisoning.

16. That if a dog is fond of a man it is an infallible sign that the man is a good sort, and one to be trusted.

17. That blondes are flightier than brunettes.

18. That a nurse, however ugly, always looks beautiful to the sick man.

19. That book-keepers are always round-shouldered.

20. That, if one touches a hop-toad, one will get warts.

21. That a collar-button that drops to the floor when one is dressing invariably rolls into an obscure and inaccessible spot and eludes the explorations of its owner.

§ 14

Ethical Origins.—The concept of man as the moral animal *par excellence* is full of absurdity. The truth is that man is the least moral of all the mammals, and that what little native morality he possesses is an inheritance from his savage ancestors, and tends to vanish as he grows civilized. No race of men has ever punished violations of the moral code as severely as they are punished by the lower animals. Among tigers, lions, hyenas, jackals, elephants, leopards, cougars and wolves the punishment for adultery is death. This surely beats the Unitarians.

§ 15

Further Rosemary.—Grace Kimball . . . Richard Harlowe . . . lead pencils with a small hole in the ivory top

containing a magnifying glass through which, when one squinted sufficiently, one could see a picture of Garret A. Hobart . . . Tokalon, winner of the Brooklyn Handicap . . . Lou Dillon . . . Dan Patch . . . Edward Payson Weston . . . B. J. Wefers . . . Alvin Kraenzlein . . . Paddy Ryan . . . the Valkyrie III . . . Isabelle Evesson . . . Isabelle Urquhart . . . Jacob Schaefer . . . penny taffy balls containing prize marbles . . . Pawnee Bill . . . Zerlina . . . Serpolette . . . Frank Bush. . . .

§ 16

The Puritan Plato.—One discerns, in all right-thinking American criticism, the doctrine that Ralph Waldo Emerson was a great man, but the specifications supporting that doctrine are seldom displayed with any clarity. Despite the vast mass of writing about him, he remains to be worked out critically; practically all the existing criticism of him is marked by his own mellifluous obscurity. Perhaps a good deal of this obscurity is due to contradictions inherent in the man's character. He was dualism ambulant. What he actually *was* was seldom identical with what he represented himself to be or what his admirers thought him to be. Universally greeted, in his own day, as a revolutionary, he was, in point of fact, imitative and cautious—an importer of stale German elixirs, sometimes direct and sometimes through the Carlylean branch house, who took good care to dilute them with butter-milk before merchanting them. The theoretical spokesman, all his life long, of bold and forthright thinking, of the unafraid statement of ideas, he stated his own so warily and so muggily that they were adopted on the one hand by Nietzsche and on the other hand by the messiahs of the New Thought, that lavender buncombe.

What one notices about him chiefly is his lack of influence upon the main stream of American thought, such as it is. He had admirers and even worship-

pers, but no apprentices. Nietzscheism and the New Thought are alike tremendous violations of orthodox American doctrine. The one makes a headlong attack upon egalitarianism, the corner-stone of American politics; the other substitutes mysticism, which is the notion that the true realities are all concealed, for the prevailing American notion that the only true realities lie upon the surface, and are easily discerned by Congressmen, newspaper editorial writers and members of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics. The Emerson cult, in America, has been an affectation from the start. Not many of the chautauqua orators, college professors, vassarized old maids and other such bogus *intelligentsia* who devote themselves to it have any intelligible understanding of the Transcendentalism at the heart of it, and not one of them, so far as I can make out, has ever executed Emerson's command to "defer never to the popular cry." On the contrary, it is precisely within the circle of Emersonian adulation that one finds the greatest tendency to test all ideas by their respectability, to combat free thought as something intrinsically vicious, and to yield placidly to "some great decorum, some fetish of a government, some ephemeral trade, or war, or man." It is surely not unworthy of notice that the country of this prophet of Man Thinking is precisely the country in which every sort of dissent from the current pishposh is combated most ferociously, and in which there is the most vigorous existing tendency to suppress free speech altogether.

Thus Emerson, on the philosophical side, has left but faint tracks behind him. His quest was for "facts amidst appearances," and his whole metaphysic revolved around a doctrine of transcendental first causes, a conception of interior and immutable realities, distinct from and superior to mere transient phenomena. But the philosophy that actually prevails among his countrymen—a philosophy put into caressing terms by William James—teaches an al-

most exactly contrary doctrine: its central idea is that whatever satisfies the immediate need is substantially true, that appearance is the only form of fact worthy the consideration of a man with money in the bank and the old flag floating over him.

Nor has Emerson had any ponderable influence as a literary artist in the technical sense, or as the prophet of a culture—that is, at home. Despite the feeble imitations of campus critics, his manner has vanished with his matter. There is, in the true sense, no Emersonian school of American writers. Current American writing, with its cocksureness, its somewhat hard competence, its air of selling goods, is utterly at war with his loose, impressionistic method, his often mystifying groping for ideas, his relentless pursuit of phrases. In the same way, one searches the country in vain for any general reaction to the cultural ideal that he set up. When one casts about for men that he moved profoundly, men who got light from his torch, one thinks first and last, not of Americans, but of Nietzsche and Hermann Grimm, the Germans, and of Tyndall and Matthew Arnold, the Englishmen. What remains of him at home, as I have said, is no more than, on the one hand, a somewhat absurd affectation of intellectual fastidiousness, now almost extinct even in New England, and, on the other hand, a debased Transcendentalism rolled into pills for fat women with vague pains and inattentive husbands—in brief, the New Thought—in brief, imbecility.

This New Thought, so highly characteristic of American superficiality, now almost monopolizes him. One hears of him in its preposterous literature and one hears of him in text-books for the young, but not often elsewhere. Allowing everything possible, it would surely be absurd to hold that he has colored and conditioned the main stream of American thought and American literature as Goethe colored and conditioned the thought of Germany, or Pushkin

that of Russia, or Voltaire that of France. . . .

§ 17

On Youth's Ideals.—Richard Brinsley Sheridan, probably more than any other man who ever lived, combined in himself all those qualities which go to make up the young girl's ideal. The young boy's ideal is ever a composite of Buffalo Bill, Theodore Roosevelt, Nick Carter, John L. Sullivan and the driver of the neighborhood hook-and-ladder. Thus, at the tender age of twelve, does woman already begin to suggest the superior acumen which she exhibits in adult years.

§ 18

Amicum perdere.—One of the most mawkish of human delusions is the notion that friendship should be eternal, or, at all events, lifelong, and that any act which puts a term to it is somehow discreditable. Nothing could be more preposterous. The fact is that a man of active and resilient mind outwears his friendships just as certainly as he outwears his love affairs, his politics, his epistemology and his under-clothes. They become threadbare, shabby, pumped-up, irritating, depressing. They convert themselves from living realities into moribund artificialities, and stand in sinister opposition to freedom, self-respect and truth. It is as corrupting to preserve them after they have grown fly-blown and hollow as it is to keep up the forms of passion after passion itself is a corpse. Every act and attitude that they involve thus becomes an act of hypocrisy, an attitude of dishonesty. . . . A prudent man, remembering that life is short, gives an hour or two, now and then, to a critical examination of his friendships. He weighs them, edits them, tests the metal of them. A few he retains, perhaps with radical changes in their terms. But the majority he expunges from his minutes and tries to forget, as he tries to forget the cold and clammy loves of year before last.

§ 19

Definition of Dramatic Critic.—One who has still not sold his play.

§ 20

The Unknowable.—The effect of science is to make mankind vain. Penetrating so many secrets, we cease to believe in the unknowable. But there it sits nevertheless, philosophically licking its chops. Why is the so-called science of sociology, as ardent young college professors expound it, such an imbecility? Why is a large part of economics? Why does politics always elude the classifiers and theorizers? Why do fashions in metaphysics change almost as often as fashions in women's hats? Simply because the unknowable casts its black shadows across all these fields—simply because the professors here

attempt to label and pigeon-hole factors that are as elusive and intangible as the way of a man with a maid.

§ 21

Definition.—Laundry: A commercial enterprise, the prosperity of which is conditioned on its ability to remove black dirt stains from shirts, collars, underwear, handkerchiefs and towels, and to supplant them with brown iron stains.

§ 22

A Hidden Cause.—Many a woman, in order to bring the man of her choice to the altar of God, has to fight him with such relentless vigilance and ferocity that she comes to hate him. This explains the unhappiness of many marriages. In particular, it explains the unhappiness of many marriages based upon what is called "love."



EX TENEBRIS

By Charles Recht

NOW quiet are the avenues of the earth,
 And Death, that grew so commonplace to all,
 Shall now resume his tragic mien. Rebirth
 Has come to us. Today we dare recall
 The infinitude of beauty—the wild shore
 Where the surf surges with reminiscent beat—
 Torn sunset—starlit lake—the antique lore
 Of Love's old iliads. We dare repeat
 Gossamer fables dipt in magic hue
 Of fragrant Orient. Or, perchance best,
 Weave into song the dearest dream—of You
 Who summarize the beauty of the rest.
 All this new wisdom about women lies,
 Pagan Eros laughs at Christian year;
 We men are to labor and idolize,
 Women to smile—as you do now, my dear.
 I shall not write of battles or despair
 Of man's folly. Let me immortalize
 The rebel gold of your tumultuous hair,
 The peace-entreating intrigue of your eyes.



A KISS FOR THE OLD MARQUIS

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

CARÈNE and Pompey Gilfoil were in Naples. Carène had looked at the bay from their hotel, from the shores all along to Pompeii, and from the arid slopes of Vesuvius. Her humour was laconic. Pompey, on the contrary, found enjoyment in viewing the storied ruins and loitering through the shops, purchasing specimens of Neapolitan art in lava and nice little sketches of the South Italian seaport—famed for its follies and its sky-blue water.

Carène stood by a window of their suite, looking out at the night. The bay was surflless and every star shone in the heavens.

Pompey was reading aloud from a quaint volume he had just acquired; in his richly modulated, rather ponderous voice, he was reading her the love-story of Pergolesus, who, at the age of twenty-two, had died in Naples as he finished the last verse of his *Stabat Mater*.

Tracing a star on the window-sill with the tip of a slim forefinger, Carène's apathy had a fleck of tears; a whim, a mood, a what-you-will, had led her to suggest Naples to Pompey—ever so many years before, a great-great aunt of hers, a French *duchesse*, had sent vagrant footsteps echoing down the shady side of family history by making Naples her playground for an *affaire du cœur*, and Carène had foolishly hoped that she and her banker-husband might play at being lovers on the ground famed for picturesque follies. *Hélas!* in the dreamy, sky-blue seaport she had for a *vis-a-vis* a husband in cheerful pursuit of the commonplace!

Pompey's well-balanced voice read of

how young Pergolesus and his beloved once knelt together at the passing of a *Corpus Christi* procession; sacred implements and symbols, canopies, swinging censers, tapestries of scarlet—

A sigh fell from Carène's pouting lips. She wilfully meditated upon the love-affair of her unholy little *duchesse*, who, at twenty-two, had run away from her *duc* with a gay *marquis*—relinquishing all for an idyl in Naples. Her forefinger idly traced a gay figure on the window-sill, an indefinite conception of a lover, young, playful, dreamy. She wondered—half yawning—if there were such a playfellow in Naples, or in all the world. *Comment donc!*

She said to Pompey, quite gently:

"Suppose you stop reading about Pergo and come look at the stars—they are so bright this evening."

Pompey came to the window with his finger in the leaves of the romance.

"What a jolly old city this is, with all its mummified loves!" he exclaimed, standing beside her.

"Are all of them mummified, none of them living?" she shrugged.

"I know of one that's very much alive!" laughed Pompey, looking at her.

"I know of none," she sighed.

"That's somewhat unkind of you, my dear." Pompey went back to his chair by the reading-lamp.

She lighted a cigarette.

Blowing circles of smoke and breaking them with her fingers, she turned from the window. She sat among the cushions of a divan and smoked restively. "Read of Pergolesus, *mon cher mari*. And, tomorrow, let us leave Naples and return to New York—where the stars are less obtrusive."

Pompey watched the circles of cigarette smoke rise above her shapely head.

"I'm sorry you're not having a good time in Naples," he said, soberly; "is there anywhere else you'd like to go, Carène?"

"No place on earth, Pomp." She put a cushion behind her head.

He found his paragraph on the page of his rare volume.

Before taking up the broken thread of the story he said, equitably:

"If you wish, we'll start for home tomorrow, dear; so don't fret about the Neapolitan stars."

Carène finished her cigarette and lighted another. After a while she turned her head so that she could see the stars. *Ah, l'étoile délicateuse!* She framed little smoke-kisses that floated to no one from her lips.

A modified knock on the door was followed by the appearance of Carène's maid, with a missive in her hand.

"What is it, Witherspoon?" asked Pompey.

"A note for Mrs. Gilfoil, sir."

The animated automaton that Carène had brought with her from New York moved forward with the letter.

Carène held out her hand for an envelope of superfine texture.

She put aside her cigarette and sat up among the cushions of the divan to examine the missive. The handwriting was that of an old person, for it had the curls and quirls of another mode. She turned the envelope over on her palm. The seal bore the crest of a marquisate.

"Is anyone waiting for an answer, Wither?" inquired Carène.

"No, Mrs. Gilfoil; the messenger did not wait."

Witherspoon withdrew. Carène broke the seal of the envelope.

"*Madame*"—the word was the perfection of elaborate chirography—

I have learned by a happy chance of your presence in a hotel on the Via Chiaia.

Because I am a very old man two fingers from death, and because, in my

youth, I knew your charming great-great aunt, Antoinette, Duchesse de Brazac, I am making you acquainted with my presence here. I have been living in the Villa Ricordo on the Chiaia for a number of years.

Madame, the old may ask favors of the young, may they not?

Will you favor me by having Monsieur Gilfoil bring you some morning to my villa—that I may have the exquisite anguish of beholding you, also, that I may put into your hands the only memento I possess of one whose memory I dare to cherish?

I fear, Madame, you are not my friend. But I am

Yours,

Edouard Verdier.

(Marquis de Guimauve.)

Carène read again this unexpected communication penned in a very old and shakily gay handwriting.

Colour came and went in her face. She sat quite still on the divan. Edouard Verdier was no other than the marquis who in the long ago had been the lover of her great-great aunt, *la petite duchesse!*—he was no other than the titled playfellow of the shady idyl in Naples!

"Who is your note from, dear?" asked Pompey.

Her lashes remained on her cheeks. Quivers of colour vivified her face.

"From a poor dear who shouldn't be a friend of mine—but is," she murmured.

Pompey was surprised. "Are any of our friends in Naples, Carène?"

She was contemplative, still looking down.

"The dear is but two fingers from death, Pomp, and wishes to see me."

She read from the note, in her charming voice, "—that I may have the exquisite anguish of beholding you—"

Her lashes lifted, disclosing sparkling eyes.

"Isn't that nicely phrased?"

"Why 'exquisite anguish'?" smiled Pompey.

"Isn't it always anguish for the very

old to behold the very young?" she reproached.

"It may be," he admitted, smile ebbing—Pompey was some years older than his lovely French wife.

Carène rose impulsively, and, in her captivating way, laid her cheek for a second on his hand. Then she put the note back into its envelope.

"I cannot refuse so nicely turned a request," she declared, and glanced at the clock.

"Shall you go this evening?" inquired Pompey, comfortable in his chair by the reading-lamp.

"Of course. The poor dear!"

She tucked the crested envelope into her girdle—and crossed the room to ring for Witherspoon.

"What a bother!" commented Pompey, putting his book aside.

Carène went toward her bedroom.

"Yes, isn't it?" she agreed. "But you shan't be bothered with the dull old darling—I'll take Witherspoon with me, the villa is not far."

She switched on the lights at her mirror.

"Send Witherspoon with an excuse," suggested Pompey; "tell your old lady friend we're leaving tomorrow, and you're packing tonight."

"Fie on you, Pomp!" — Carène opened her jewel-case—"bidding me lie to one who may soon be able to inform *le bon Dieu* of the fib!"

She selected *fleur-de-lis* earrings and a tall coiffure-comb that had once been worn by the Duchesse de Brazac. Going to her clothes-closet, she contemplated the gowns there.

"Which of my frocks produces exquisite anguish in your breast, Pomp?"

"Your most expensive one, dear," he laughed.

Witherspoon came in answer to the ring.

"I'm going on an errand of mercy, Wither," said Carène, "and you are going with me. I'll wear my old-gold brocade."

"Yes, Mrs. Gilfoil," replied Witherspoon, moving to the closet and taking the desired frock from its padded hang-

er. The old-gold brocade was sleeveless, with square neck and looped train, and a band of seed-pearls running from the left shoulder to the hem.

Carène had her hair dressed in a golden swirl and topknot—the tall coiffure-comb and old-fashioned earrings added a touch of piquancy to her youthful face. The wrap she selected was sky-blue chiffon beaded with seed-pearls. In adventurous spirits, she returned to the drawing-room of the suite—Witherspoon following.

"*Au revoir, mon bibliophile,*" she said, stopping to pat the volume of romance in Pompey's hands.

"By crickets," said Pompey, "this seems a cheerless way for you to spend your final evening in Naples, Carène!" His handsome face puckered sympathetically.

Carène smoothed away the puckers with her fingers. "But then, you know, most of our evenings here have been cheerless, *mon cher*—and final evenings anywhere are apt to drive one wild."

She put her arms into the wrap that Witherspoon held for her.

With a volatile treading of her costly high heels, she left the suite, accompanied by her maid.

II

FROM the wide spaces of the Chiaia, the starlight seemed to slope sharply down to the brilliant bay. The straggling old city of steep and tortuous thoroughfares, of stair-canyons and storied heights, was glamorous in the deep blue of the night.

They reached the Villa Ricordo.

Carène said, civilly, to her maid:

"Wither, you may find yourself a romantic step to sit on while I make my call. Look at the stars, and thank them that your visage saved you from having a lover."

"Where shall I find the step, Mrs. Gilfoil?" asked Witherspoon, woodenly.

"Follow your nose, *folle*. It cannot lead you to a misstep!" Carène snapped her fingers. "You may wait for me here, Wither, if it pleases you to stand

like a blockhead under the stars," she added with a laugh.

She turned her back on her maid.

Carène looked up at the marble pile where the Marquis de Guimaube—once the playfellow of the little *duchesse*—had been living for a number of years. Colour again tumbled into her face. Her delicately audacious nostrils quivered. Her hands flew together, with a gesture of expectancy.

Since the day when she had first heard the sorry tale of Antoinette de Brazac from the tongue of a garrulous *bonne* certain sorry tendencies in her own nature had condoned and defended the wayward one who had put the blot on the family escutcheon. The same *bonne* had taught her to lisp, "*Le vice est odieux—la vertu est belle.*" And under her baby breath she had stubbornly whispered, "*Ma tante est belle!*"

Tonight she was poised before a Neapolitan villa that housed the old *marquis!*

She was to meet the gay and witty playfellow of Antoinette!

She could almost fancy herself Antoinette, loitering under the love-stars at the palpitant threshold. She even thought of the betrayed *duc* erasing a frail young image from his mind. Under the stars, at the entrance of the villa, she was imbued with the spirit of her little great-great aunt—so long dead that she might be part of the star-dust!

Feeling so like Antoinette, she wondered by what simple way she might cross the threshold of the villa. She could not, as a ghost of Edouard Verdier's youth, ring his bell, and send him her name by a servant!

She ascended the steps of a low balcony, and entered the villa by a window open to the starlight.

Ciel! she was within his house! She flung her train over her arm and crept forward, through big, dark rooms. Soon she came to a lighted portion of the villa. Her hands flew to her heart. She heard a feeble old voice behind the drawn, plum-colored curtains of an archway:

"*Fermez la fenêtre, j'ai froid.*" It was only a whimper.

She heard the footsteps of his *valet de chambre*, and the closing of a window.

"*N'y a-t-il pas de lait chaud?*" quavered the aged voice.

The footsteps of the valet sounded again, and were lost in the distance.

Carène slipped through the hangings of the archway.

The room was lighted by candelabra of wax tapers—they shed a glimmer not unlike starlight over a bag of bones huddled in a huge plum-coloured chair.

The old *marquis* felt the draft on his hairless head.

"*Zut!*" he cried.

He turned his head, and saw her.

"*Toinette!*" he faltered—staring.

He gathered his wits with difficulty—he was very, very old.

"*Depuis quand êtes-vous ici?—comment vous appelez-vous?*" he managed to say.

She approached his chair, holding out her hand. "*Je m'appelle Carène.*"

"*Ah!*" said the old *marquis*, taking her hand. "I know you now. You are her great-great niece, and the image of her."

His scant, arrogant eyebrows lifted, in lieu of a bow. "Forgive me that I do not rise, Madame. I cannot, for I am quite tottery."

"Pray do not think of rising, *Marquis*," she begged.

She seated herself in one of the gigantic chairs—the fleur-de-lis earrings glinted in the candlelight and the soft illumination struck rainbows from the tall coiffure-comb.

"I received your note this evening, and have come to see you," she told him in her slight young voice.

The old *marquis* shook a trembling finger, on which a ring hung loose.

"*Ta! ta!* where is your good husband?" he said reprovingly. "So beautiful a young creature should not be unchaperoned *à la nuit tombante.*"

She traced nothings on her train with the toe of her delicate slipper. Her retort was light.

"A good husband absent is a better chaperon than a bad one present."

His ringed finger wavered to his chin, and, though he propped his chin in his palm, he could not steady it. Regarding her, his thoughts were *distrain* again.

"Except for your blonde hair, you are Toinette, in all the glory of her youth," he cried. His nose and chin met in a smile that gave his features a gleam of gaiety. "What would you think, my dear, if I said to you, 'This is rash, rash, Toinette. What of the *duc, mon enfant charmante*?'"

He could not control the trembling of his chin, though he fairly held to it with his long, white fingers.

Carène lifted humid eyes. She said, impetuously:

"Tell me of Antoinette de Brazac—tell of Toinette. All my life I have wished to hear her true story, to know the truth about her— Was the *duc* a bad husband, whose presence outraged her? Or was he a good husband and the fault hers? In going away with you, Marquis, did she attain any happiness? What was the true version of her folly, and her end?"

The words were eager, and her young hands seemed on the point of shaking the story of *la petite duchesse* from this shadow of a gay *viveur*.

"*Tout beau*—softly, not so fast," he expostulated, holding to his chin. "*Je suis vieillard. Je perds la tramontane.*"

She was quick with a contrite gesture. "I am always so thoughtless. My *bonne* used to warn me that I would crush a Sevres vase in my path if I happened to crave a soap-bubble on the other side of the vase."

She traced vague bubbles with her forefinger on the arm of her chair.

The words and action put a twinkle into his sunken blue eyes. He followed the foolish tracteries of her forefinger. His well-modeled head, nude but for a fringe of finespun white hair, was inclined to nod.

"How often have I seen Toinette draw nothings with her finger, in that abashed young fashion!" he chuckled. "I trust, my child, that there is no sin-

ner like myself in your life. I hope you have a good husband."

"I am the worst sinner I know," laughed Carène. "And my husband is a paragon."

He was alarmed. "Not a bore, my dear?"

"No." She was reflective. "My husband is handsome, attentive, and not devoid of humour."

"And his age?" asked the old *marquis*.

She swerved the trend of the conversation by bending forward to softly touch his hand.

"Let us talk of Antoinette," she said brightly. "You have a memento of her. Show it to me."

"*Mais oui*," he responded — and opened the drawer of a card-table beside his chair.

While his long hand rummaged through a jumble of cards, chips and dice, he said, half to himself,

"I would not part with it were I not dying. *Zut!* I would not have it thrown out to some ash-heap."

He found a sandalwood fan in the drawer, and spread it open on his knee.

He fondled the fan. His highly bred nose and chin met again in the smile that showed he had been quite magnetic.

"Her own fan!" he crooned. "Here, on the sticks, see, her own handwriting! —six of her *amourettes*, tabulated in violet ink by her fair fingers—until we come to the seventh stick, which tells of her love for me, then six blank sticks—"

Lacklustrous, he stared at the frail memento.

Carène rose to examine the fan.

Standing beside his chair, she scanned the lightly phrased violet folies—the seventh stick was inscribed with the faded words, "*Je t'aime.*"

She looked down, wonderingly, at the bag of bones in the great chair.

The valet entered with a goblet of warm milk for the old marquis.

"*Ta! ta!*" cried the marquis, rousing to wave the mild goblet away. "What a sacrilege! to talk of Toinette while

sipping the essence of the cow! *N'y a-t-il pas de vin, Marc?*"

He found his gold-headed stick by the chair, and shooed the valet off. Putting the point of his stick on the floor, he added, with a tinge of vivacity, to Carène:

"Come, my dear, we will go out to the south terrace and drink our wine. There, we can see the stars she loved, and the bay."

With the aid of his stick, he got to his feet—and was seized by a fit of sneezing and coughing.

How very old he was! The cough threatened to shake him to pieces, and when he sneezed it seemed as if he might never do so again!

Carène seized a medicine-glass on the table, and put it to his lips.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she exclaimed.

She held him up until he recovered his breath.

His nose and chin met in a smile, and he held up two of his fingers.

"I am only that far from death, my dear," he wheezed. "If you will hand me my cloak, and lend me your arm, we will set off for the south terrace."

She put his cloak about him and slipped her arm through his—half of his incredibly light weight fell on the curve of her elbow. The gold-headed stick had the other half of him. She and the stick escorted the old marquis in safety to the south terrace of his villa.

III

ONE could not ask more of the world than the view of the stars and the bay from the south terrace. Myriads of close and far stars, and the bay sweeping out to the open sea. Carène and the old marquis were silent for a time, looking at the blue night that had been beloved by one whose memory they dared to cherish.

The valet brought wine.

They drank a toast to Antoinette.

Edouard Verdier, Marquis de Guimauve, trespasser, dying sinner, tipped his polished wine-glass, and talked of

the naughty Neapolitan episode of his youth.

"Ah," he mused—buoyed by the wine—"those months were incomparable—such sunlight! clouds of chased silver against sapphire heavens, gentle winds that tipped the waves with white—I even remember the multitudinous fleas as a delight!"

He put his chin on his stick and peered down at the bay older even than himself.

"You know, my dear, ours was not the ordinary love-affair. We did not come to Naples to sit on terraces like this and drink rare wine. It was ToINETTE's choice to love in a simpler way, here by the sea. My dear, we were odd, eccentric—quite mad, the gossips had us. We made our habitation a fishing-hut, down there somewhere."

He pointed vaguely with his stick.

"We dressed like the fisher-folk, lived like them, selling our hauls for a living.

"What a Naples we knew! On the *Fête-Dieu* we were among the humble folk enjoying the music in the Villa Reale, enchanted by the grottoes and little groves, the recesses and fountains, the shrubs and statues—by no chance were we in the carriages on the Chiaia. Ah, they were months! We were playmates in the game of love, told with a new twist. We cooked our own macaroni, my dear. When we had pence to spare we mixed, hand-in-hand, with the merry populace and spent our earnings on some Punch and Judy show. They were months! They were months! And she was a love-playmate!"

He put his chin on his stick again, tenderly chortling.

Carène touched his stick. "What happened then? Why did you not go on playing together?"

"It was only a game, my dear. It could not last."

"Why? You loved each other."

"*A la vérité.* So one day we quarreled and parted."

"What was your quarrel, playing so happily together?"

"I—have forgotten. *Je perds la tra-*

montane. I think—it was about a real fisher-lass, my dear."

He rapped his stick on the marble slab of the terrace-seat. "I tell you, I was a good-for-nothing! When I heard that Toinette had returned to Paris and thrown herself into the Seine I felt little regret—"

"*Hélas*, she could not return to the *duc*!" reflected Carène, who held the sandal-wood fan in her hands.

He rapped his stick again on the marble slab, continuing:

"I even felt half relieved that her beautiful eyes could not reproach me any more. '*Il faut s'amuser*' was my motto. It was not until I was old that I really loved Toinette. After wandering from one place to another, from novelty to novelty, from pleasure to pleasure, I came back to Naples, the spot most sentimental in my memory. I shall die here very soon, very soon."

His head nodded, and his chin sank into the withered hollow of his throat.

Carène spread out the sandal-wood fan. The fragrance of the East Indian wood assailed her nostrils. She thoughtfully studied the love-memento of thirteen sticks inscribed with six *peccadilles* and a seventh *péché*.

"You see, my dear," said the old marquis, after a while, "what a sorry thing a woman does to play with a mate like me."

"I see," said Carène, eyes downcast.

"The trouble is, my dear—a woman is apt to love a playmate overlong."

"One can never love a good husband overlong, Marquis."

"Never, my dear."

There were tears in her eyes. "*La pauvre petite tante!*"

"*La pauvre petite.*"

Looking at her wet blue eyes in the starlight, his wits went wandering back, over the years—again the meeting of his nose and chin showed what charm his smile had once possessed.

"Do not cry, image of Toinette," tenderly. Between her face in the starlight and the thimbleful of wine in his head, he grew quite befuddled—the poor old marquis.

"*Je te chanterai, bien-aimé*," he cried. As if his stick were a guitar, he strummed on it. He crooned a love-strain, in Neapolitan dialect:

"*Ma n' atu sole
cchiu bbello, oi ne',
o' sole mio—'*"

Suddenly he was leaning forward, as though she receded before his vision. "*Je crains d'être malade, portrait de Toinette!*" He held up a finger. "I am but this far from death, my dear. The old may ask favours of the young, may they not?—favour me by not pirouetting into the dark, before my eyes."

Carène humoured him, sitting beside him on the terrace-slab.

"The young are apt to pirouette in the starlight, Marquis," she laughed, and touched his stick to steady his vision.

"Ah," he said, more easily, "I see you now! Thank you."

For a minute or two he appeared to dream that the face beside him was in reality Toinette's.

"I am glad you have come, I have wanted so to see you, *petite*."

"You told me to come," said Carène, carrying on his fancy.

"So I did."

Dreaming of the past, he trembled. He said guiltily:

"I did not mean to be so sweet a child's destruction!—*bien-aimé*, I did not mean to send you to the Seine!"

He held to his chin, and sought to banish the dream by saying:

"Ta! ta! I am talking nonsense. Turn your starry eyes away, my dear."

But he shivered in his cloak and his flawless false teeth began to chatter—to the complete undoing of his chin.

"You are chilled, you are not so well!" Carène was alarmed for him. "Shall we go within?"

She rose, offering him her hand.

She timed her footsteps to his almost imperceptible progress from the terrace to the plum-coloured room.

He clung to her hand after he was in

his great chair. He confided to her: "Every night in the year I am haunted by the hope that Toinette might come to me, and the fear that she might! I have had little relief from her beautiful eyes. They have always followed me."

Carène sat on the arm of his chair, hand in his.

"They are love's eyes," she reminded him. "You should not fear them."

"But they are drowned eyes, my dear!"

"Not the Seine, nor any river, was deep enough to drown her love."

"It drowned her young body!"

"And freed her soul to love you forever, Marquis."

"Zut!" he said pettishly. "Souls—I do not believe in souls! If I did, I'd believe in my own damnation."

His arrogant eyebrows lifted. He looked at her hand, and lost his arrogance.

"I did not mean to make her drown herself!" he cried out, as if in torment. "Six of her frailties were merely little skips of youth. I did not mean to make her write 'I love thee' on the seventh stick of her fan. It was mad of her to die because of me! Death comes to us soon enough. She was young to die, young!"

"But, think," said Carène, consoling him, "if she had lived she would have grown old, and no woman likes to do that. Those who die young are never wrinkled or unbeautiful. The world has hardly soiled them."

"The world," mumbled the old marquis, "is a mangle that yellows all our linen." He grew suddenly querulous. "Where is Marc?" bewildered—warming his hand with hers. "I am cold and tired, my dear. I want my night-cap of milk."

She drew his cloak about him. "I will ring for Marc—where shall I find the call-bell?"

He grew petulant.

"Find it yourself, my dear," he snapped at her.

She located the bell, and rang for his valet.

The old marquis huddled chillily in his chair. He missed her hand.

"Where are you?" he said crossly. His voice thinned. "We're not playing a game of hide-and-seek, are we?"

He found her with his eyes, and half whispered, "What sort of game are we playing? Do you know, my dear? I don't."

He watched the candlelight twinkle on her tall coiffure-comb, and swirl of blonde hair.

"It is droll,"—he moistened his lips—"but I wish, from my soul, you were Toinette. I wish you had her hair."

He propped a finger under his chin, and looked woefully witless. "I trust, *ma petite amie*, you are not a charming *diablesse* come to escort me on my journey across the Styx—you are, perhaps, the embodiment of my sins, *n'est-ce pas?*" His nose and chin met in a ghastly, gay smile.

He was afraid this might be true. He trembled quite violently. "*Je perds la tramontane—comment vous appelez-vous?*"

He peered at her as if the room were growing dark.

"Who are you?" His face went ashen gray.

Carène felt so sorry for him that she fibbed to him.

"I am Toinette," she cried. "Do not be afraid, Marquis. I will take you up to God, and tell Him all about you. It is true that you have lived a wicked life. But God is good. We shall yet play together in Paradise."

She took the old marquis by the hand and kissed him.

The kiss made him lose all his terrors.

"*Je t'aime,*" he said, quite innocently. "*Ta! ta! je n'ai pas peur de la mort.*"

He closed his eyes, his hand slipping from hers.

She heard his valet coming. When the footsteps were at the threshold she picked up the memento that the old marquis had given her and passed between the plum-coloured hangings, through the dark rooms, to the window opening on the starlight.

IV

WITHERSPOON was waiting for her at the entrance of the villa.

"The poor dear is dying, Wither," said Carène, gravely.

Under the brilliant stars, she returned to her hotel.

She entered the suite with a soundless treading of her costly heels. There was scant colour in her face. Her eyes were deep-blue.

She said, without breath, to Pompey, "The poor dear is dying—*hélas!*"

Pompey had finished the romance of Pergolesus and was smoking a cigar over a batch of late mail.

"That's too bad," he replied, somewhat abstractedly. He added, "Here's a letter from Isabel—it's lucky you're ready to leave Naples, for she wants you to be matron-of-honour at little Isabel's wedding."

He handed her a very modern note-sheet from his sister, Isabel McKim.

Carène glanced at the fashionably slant chirography on the page and made

a feint of reading the note as she walked to a window of the suite. She drew off her gloves and pressed her cold hands to her cheeks. Putting aside Isabel's note, she opened the sandal-wood fan and spread it on the window-sill—her forefinger traced the six *amourettes*, the seventh *mémoire*, and the blank sticks that followed the inscription, "*Je t'aime.*"

Beyond the window, the Bay of Naples plashed gaily in the night that seemed fashioned for picturesque follies and youthful adventuring. For love-games. For kisses slight enough to mean nothing, yet sweet enough to mean all, brief enough to be unsubstantial yet deep enough to haunt the memory, young enough to enrapture the senses, yet old enough to enslave them.

Feeling that something was dying in her—and that the expiring little thing was folly—Carène closed the sandal-wood fan, stick by stick.

Half yawning, she wished herself old as the stars.



THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

By T. F. Mitchell

AT first he fairly bubbled with good nature. He made it a point to be amiable and never passed a pretty girl in the street without making some flattering remark to her. After a while, though, he abandoned the practice. He found he was losing too many teeth.



A WOMAN always remembers the men who kissed her, and never forgives those who failed to continue.



MERE money will not buy happiness. It takes a whole lot of money.

REMORSE

By June Gibson

SATAN was ill.
"What is the matter?" asked his wife.

"Remorse," said Satan. "A school teacher was sitting on a bench. I passed disguised as a matinee idol, tall, dark, handsome, and she gazed wistfully upon me. She closed her eyes and dreamed of love. She felt a kiss on her

lips and opened her eyes. . . . I am filled with remorse."

"Don't grieve," said Mrs. Satan. "It probably was the top moment of her life."

"No; I am filled with remorse," groaned Satan. "I had unthinkingly changed my disguise. I was a cow."



SONG OF MAD PARSON

By John McClure

A-PASSING down by Bugnall Brig
Below the Devil's Perch,
I saw the fairies dancing
As I went home from church:

Queen Mab of ghostly beauty
(Of all earth's queens most sweet!),
Her maids that know no duty
But that of dancing feet—

Her maids in gauze and gossamer
And elfin diadems
Weaving in faery circles there
The witchery of dreams!

And I forgot the Eucharist,
And I forgot the day
For Mab, the Beautiful Unkiss'd,
And slim Titania.

Among the moonbeams glancing
Like arrows from the snow
I saw the fairies dancing
On twinkling heel and toe.

ENCHANTERS OF MEN

VIII

A Coquette of France

By Thornton Hall

PROFESSIONAL beauty and supreme woman of business, actress and *fille de joie*; the one woman who reaped a rich harvest of gold from the French Revolution, and dared to snap defiant fingers in the face of Robespierre; who at sixty-five brought an embryo-Emperor, a suppliant for love, to her feet; and when within sight of her eightieth year, was the heroine of a love affair with a man half a century younger than herself—such were a few of the varied rôles played by Marguerite Brunet, before the curtain was at last rung down on the amazing drama of her life.

And yet no woman ever seemed less born to romance than Mademoiselle when she made her obscure entry into the world under the roof of her father, a journeyman pin-maker of Bayonne; or when, after a very prosaic, almost sordid childhood, she was sent for education to an Ursuline convent. Her convent training ended, Marguerite Brunet, now a girl of striking beauty on the threshold of womanhood, was sent across the Atlantic to the care of a distant relative; but, reaching America, only to find that the relative had died at the very hour of her landing, she returned sadly to France. Here again misfortune awaited her coming, for within a few weeks she was left a penniless orphan to the mercy of the world.

But Marguerite was far from losing heart at Fortune's frowns. She had still a relative in Paris who would no doubt give her shelter; and Paris was the one city in all the world which she had always longed to see—the gay, friv-

olous, light-hearted capital where, if anywhere, her beauty and her ambition would have a fair field for their exercise; for already the pin-maker's daughter had dreamed many dreams of a future in which she would be a queen among women.

Thus it was that one day she set out on the diligence to distant Paris and the realization of her girlish dreams, little anticipating the adventure awaiting her there. No sooner had the pretty country girl descended from the diligence, than she was accosted by a courteous stranger who offered to conduct her to a respectable lodging-house; an offer which, in her innocence, she gratefully accepted.

In the company of her guide she was taken to a house which, on entering, she at once saw was by no means a lodging-house, and of doubtful respectability. Shown into a luxuriously furnished room, a maid now appeared with the information that her master was entertaining a few friends at supper that evening, and would be honoured if Mademoiselle would join the party. There would be no difficulty about clothes, she explained, for she had instructions to attire Mademoiselle suitably for the occasion.

Marguerite now realized her predicament—that she had been cleverly trapped for some sinister purpose; but she was quick to make her plans to turn the tables on her undesired host. She allowed the maid to attire her in a beautiful silk gown and to adorn her with jewels; and thus splendidly arrayed she was conducted to the supper-

room and introduced to the brilliant company assembled. During the supper there was no one so gay as the country maid; no sallies of wit so brilliant, no laughter so merry as hers. She was in her element, thoroughly enjoying her novel situation and looking forward to the denouement she had prepared.

At the close of the banquet she rose with flushed face and sparkling eyes, drank Monsieur's health and thanked him prettily for his unexpected hospitality.

Then she continued,

"Monsieur has kindly promised that, when the supper was over, he would provide me with an escort home—any one of his guests whose company I desire."

In vain Monsieur protested; his protests were drowned in the clamorous demand that Mademoiselle should announce her choice.

Surveying the company with critical and twinkling eyes she said,

"M. de Richelieu, will you have the goodness to give me your arm?"

"With the greatest pleasure, Mademoiselle," was the gallant answer. "Whither may I have the pleasure of conducting you?"

"To the shop of Madame Montansier, old-clothes dealer, in the Rue Saint Roch."

Thus it was that Marguerite, in her silk and jewels, turned up in the early morning hours, with her gaily-attired cavalier, at the modest home of her aunt, the old-clothes dealer, much to that good lady's astonishment and disapproval. Madame, however, was a kindly soul, ready to play a mother's part to her orphan niece; but Marguerite, after her first taste of adventure, was in no mood to resign herself to the daily duty of haggling over old clothes, as was her aunt's quite natural wish. The news of her escapade and her cleverness in outwitting a notorious *roué* was soon the gossip and amusement of all Paris; and the country maid found herself suddenly famous.

Thus, within a few days of setting foot in Paris, Marguerite had realized

her ambition to win notoriety, if not fame; and, as she had the loveliness and cleverness to take full advantage of it, we soon find her launched as Mademoiselle Montansier (a name of better sound than "Brunet") upon the career of a professional beauty.

II

For light on the next few years of Marguerite's life we are indebted to the Paris Special Police Department, whose duty it was to keep a watchful eye on the private lives of actresses and professional beauties, and deliver a daily report of their doings to the King. Louis XV, we are told, "liked to be able to embarrass the members of his Court by displaying an unexpected knowledge of their levities—to be able to nudge a grave nobleman and say to him with a leer, 'Aha! You sly dog! Where did you have supper last night? What sort of a present did you give to your charming hostess? You think I don't know, but I do!'"

These reports, the chief object of which was thus to gratify a King's prurient curiosity, trace Mademoiselle's career from the age of eighteen to the age of thirty-three—fifteen years of pleasure-chasing and luxurious living, punctuated by intervals of obscurity when her doings escaped even the lynx eyes of the police.

In these records we see Mademoiselle, after a year or two of gaiety, running off to the West Indies with an officer who soon wearied of her charms and abandoned her—to live as best she could by opening a milliner's shop. But Mademoiselle had no taste for millinery. Her eyes turned longingly to Paris and the easier life of pleasure that awaited her there. Thus we soon find her back in the French capital, installed in sumptuous apartments, with "two negro servants attired in blue, a footman and two maids" as her retinue.

We read the long list of her admirers, ranging from ducs and marquises to obscure actors, who ministered to her extravagance in exchange for her

smiles; and right merry times she seems to have had in their company.

"She gives a party every day," we read. "The company as a rule drinks heavily, makes a great noise and does not break up until three or four in the morning."

One admirer, we are told, "has given her three hundred louis"; another has presented her with a valuable necklace of diamonds. . . . In such frolicking, living in luxury and surrounded by lovers eager to feed her extravagance, Mademoiselle spent fifteen of the best years of her life, drinking deep of the cup of pleasure, without a care for the morrow or a regret for wasted talents and opportunities. And it was only when her beauty began to fade and lovers to show signs of falling off that her steps at last turned to more conventional, if less amusing, paths.

Through all these years of luxury and folly the call of the stage had been in her ears, but she had never been able to summon sufficient courage and energy to obey its summons. Now that her youth had fled and with it the freshness of her charms, her ambition was to have a theater of her own; and it was when Monsieur de Saint-Contest joined the ranks of her admirers that her opportunity came.

Monsieur was a boy of eighteen, but he was the son of France's Foreign Minister, and thus in a position to be of use to her; and, moreover, he was madly in love and thus a puppet in her hands. When she told the Minister's son that her dearest wish was to have a theater to run, her wish was quickly realized and she was soon saying good-bye to the *vie galante* and was installed at Nantes as manageress of the theater there.

Mademoiselle had at last found her true *métier*, for she had a brain as clever as her face was beautiful. It was not long before, in her capable hands, the Nantes theater became famous throughout France, and this success continued when she took M. Neuville, a handsome soldier turned actor, as partner. So little, too, was the jealousy of M. de

Saint-Contest aroused by this new rivalry that, when Mademoiselle told him she wanted a larger house, he promptly procured one for her at Versailles, and was building a still larger one, at a cost of £14,000, when death suddenly carried him off.

Mademoiselle now had the ball of Fortune at her feet. M. de Saint-Contest had certainly died most inopportunistly, after seeing her installed at Versailles; but she had now a much more powerful friend in Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, then well embarked on that career of gaiety and frivolity for which she was one day to pay so terrible a price. The story of the first meeting of the Queen and the manageress is thus told:

"While watching the performance of the comedians from the Royal box, Marie Antoinette had smelt the onion soup which they were preparing for their supper behind the scenes. It was an appetising odour, and she asked that a basin of the refectation might be sent up to her. Of course the soup was brought; of course Mlle. Montansier served it with her own hands; and that was her opportunity. The Queen was interested in the gossip of the *coulisses*; and the manageress of the theater naturally had the gossip at her finger-ends."

To the Queen, so long shut out from the world of pleasure in the dreary seclusion of Court life and the companionship of a clownish husband, this clever adventuress, with her sprightly tongue and her inexhaustible fund of anecdote and gossip, was a revelation and a delight. She must see more of her; and Mademoiselle soon found herself a welcome guest at the Royal palaces, entertaining the Queen with her droll stories and her scandal at the *petits levers*; her partner at the card table; the directress of private theatricals at the Petit Trianon; and generally installed as an intimate friend of her frivolous Majesty, much to the disgust of Louis, who strongly disapproved of such companionship for his wife.

The King's resentment, in fact, was

even carried to the point of ordering Mademoiselle's arrest and imprisonment on a flimsy charge of "impertinence" to His Majesty, a revenge which only provoked a smile from Mademoiselle and the whimsical remark, "Am I not to have any company? Does the King actually condemn me to live alone?" A question which naturally convulsed the Court, and even Louis himself, with laughter.

What could he do with such a woman, whose only objection to a prison was that she would be left to her own company? And thus the irrepressible Mademoiselle was a free woman again almost before her cell door had closed on her.

III

WITH Marie Antoinette as patron there seemed to be no height of success which the ambitious manageress might not hope to attain. She was now directress of a dozen theaters in the provinces; and she conceived the bold project of securing a monopoly of all the theaters in France. It is little wonder that the magnitude and daring of the scheme frightened the Government; but before they could come to a decision the outbreak of the Revolution gave them more serious food for deliberation.

But even the Revolution, with all its threatened horrors, had no power to daunt Mademoiselle Montansier, who transferred her Paris company to the Palais Royal and continued to flourish amid all the alarms of riot and carnage by conquetting indifferently with the rival parties. Her green-room was thronged nightly by the Girondins, who rubbed shoulders with such revolutionaries as Barras and Tallien, Desmoulins and even Robespierre himself, who sought distraction from the Terror by making love to the pretty actresses. It was the rôle of the actresses to keep the peace among the partisans; they succeeded, at any rate, in giving them something besides politics to quarrel about. Saint Just, for instance, quar-

relled with Vergniaud about Mlle. Rivière, the dancer; while Mlle. Sainval's preference for Louvet brought Mlle. Montansier a threatening letter from the revolutionary who prided himself on his incorruptibility.

"Citizen," Robespierre wrote, "they tell me that the wit of France has taken refuge in your theater—but it must not be exercised at my expense. I respect your pleasures, and I require that you should respect mine. They are few enough, owing to my grim preoccupation."

If anything could have wrecked Mademoiselle's fortunes it surely would have been the terror and upheaval which had France in their grip, but through this time of bloodshed and social wreckage she contrived, almost alone in Paris, to keep her head for more than a year above water. She coquetted impartially with Royalists and Revolutionary leaders, keeping in the good books of the opposing parties and making each her friend. Even Robespierre himself was no match for the woman who had installed her theater in the Palais Royal and kept Paris amused while her streets were running red with blood.

But when suspicion was in the very air she breathed it was not likely that even such a clever diplomatist as Mademoiselle could long escape it; especially as she was on such intimate terms with the hated Austrian, Marie Antoinette. But she was equal even to this emergency, for when she was accused of concealing Royalist arms in the cellar of her theater, she gave a dramatic and conclusive answer to the charge.

She announced that she had organized the male members of her company into a battalion of volunteers to fight the foreign foe. Actors, dancers, musicians, scene-shifters, stage carpenters—eighty-five of them in all—they presented themselves, with Neuville at their head, at the bar of the Legislative Assembly; and Neuville read a patriotic address, demanding that they should all be sent at once to the front, while their directress, with amazing energy

for a woman of sixty-three, proposed to follow them and organize theatrical performances "in the presence of the enemy."

She did so—amid what scenes of enthusiasm one can imagine. The tide of invasion was rolled back over the frontier, Mademoiselle keeping pace with the conquering troops, keeping them cheered and amused with her performances on the very fields of battle; and when at last Dumouriez occupied Brussels, she inaugurated a season in the Belgian capital.

When she returned to Paris, however, it was not long before she found herself in serious trouble. Robespierre had no reason to love her, for he held her responsible for his failure to win the affections of a lady of her company. Danton, who had been her loyal friend, had lost his head on the guillotine; and now, the Terror being at its height, Robespierre was virtually Dictator of France, and did not scruple to use his power to gratify his grudge against her.

Thus it was that Mademoiselle found herself summoned on the flimsy charge of "having built a theater in the Rue de la Loi for the purpose of setting fire to the National Library." She was arrested and imprisoned in La Force, where she lingered for eleven months until her enemies, one by one, having made their pilgrimage to the guillotine, she was at last a free woman.

So far, however, from her spirit being crushed by her confinement, Mademoiselle left her cell burning for revenge. Her character as a patriot had been vindicated; but she must have heavy damages for the losses she had suffered, and these she assessed at no less a sum than seven million francs. And, as usual, she had her way, although only after a long and resolute fight. Harassed as the Treasury was by the claims on it in this time of financial stress, the sum awarded to her was actually a million francs more than she claimed, though the payment was to be made in instalments and in paper instead of cash.

IV

MADemoiselle had now reached the age of sixty-three; for more than forty years she had had as many lovers as might have contented half a dozen exacting beauties; and it was at this time, when she might well have thought that her days of romance were over, that her greatest love adventure was awaiting her.

The man responsible for this belated romance, which narrowly escaped making an Empress of the antiquated Montansier, was Barras, who was then filling the double rôle of her admirer and of friend to Napoleon Bonaparte—still poor and little known, although he had just blossomed into a general, and with his dazzling future still as veiled from him as from the rest of the world.

It was one day in 1795 that Barras, who, after Robespierre's overthrow, was dictator of the Convention, was talking to the young Corsican soldier about his future career, and was suggesting that a well-gilded wife would be most helpful to him at this stage of his career.

"Say the word," he said laughingly, "and give me time to look round, and I'll find such a wife for you."

He had scarcely spoken the words when a visitor was announced, and Mlle. Montansier, buxom and still a handsome woman in spite of her years, sailed into the room. The young officer was presented to her, and in the general conversation that ensued Mademoiselle spoke of herself playfully as a "lonely woman," to which Napoleon gallantly replied that he was sure that any friend of Citizen Barras would be proud of the privilege of protecting her in her loneliness.

"Do you think so?" Mademoiselle coquettishly answered. "Well, I am not at all sure that I should say 'No' to such an offer."

When the lady had withdrawn Barras remarked:

"I was advising you to marry just now. What do you say to marrying Mlle. Montansier?"

"That," said Napoleon, "is certainly an idea worth thinking over. The lady's appearance is entirely in her favor. But—are you quite sure that her wealth is as genuine as her recent misfortunes? When one is thinking of such a serious matter as marriage one must know on what sort of foundation one is building."

The ice thus broken, Barras lost no time in clearing the path to the altar for his young friend. He learnt from Mademoiselle that her fortune was at least 1,200,000 francs; that she was fond of soldiers, and would not at all object to the Corsican as a husband. The preliminaries being thus satisfactory, he arranged a dinner for the purpose of bringing things to a head—and a most successful dinner it was from this point of view. Before the second course was disposed of, the host was almost forgotten in the exchange of amorous glances and sweet words. A few minutes later all the talk was of Corsica and "what we will do there" and "where we will go"; and by the time the coffee and liqueurs were reached the ill-assorted lovers were oblivious of the world in their rapt interest in each other.

But alas for love's belated dream! Before they could meet again *Vendemiaire* came, and with it Bonaparte's "whiff of grape-shot" which cleared the streets of Paris and made a national hero of him. He had taken a long step on his journey to a crown, and with that step his point of view was completely changed. A gilded bourgeoisie might be all very well as wife for a struggling soldier, but the man who saw his way to a throne must look much higher for a lady to share it with him.

Moreover, in the interval, he had met Josephine de Beauharnais, who combined rank and social influence with a rare loveliness. From the chestnut hair which rippled over her small, proudly poised head, to the arch of her tiny, dainty feet, the Creole Vicomtesse was the incarnation of all his dreams. There was witchery in every part of her—in the rich colour that mantled in her cheeks, the sweet brown eyes that

looked out between long-fringed eyelids, the small delicate nose, the nostrils "quivering at the least emotion"; the exquisite lines of the tall, supple figure, instinct with grace in every movement, and, above all, the seductive music of a voice every note of which was a caress. It is small wonder that at first sight of such superlative charms the impressionable little Corsican lost both head and heart to them and determined to make them his own.

Thus it was a very different Napoleon who accepted Mlle. Montansier's invitation to a party given in his honor. He was courtesy itself to his hostess, but his eyes no longer looked unutterable things, his lips no longer uttered words of love. He was clearly not happy in his environment; and when his aide-de-camp, Junot, opportunely arrived—no doubt by previous arrangement—to call him away on urgent business, he apologized profusely to Mademoiselle for the necessity which called him from her charming presence, bade her "au revoir"—and took good care not to come again.

Thus it was that the pin-maker's daughter lost her chance of a crown, which, if *Vendemiaire* had been delayed but a month, would almost certainly have been hers. But so far from sitting down to bemoan this scurvy trick of fortune, she threw herself more energetically than ever into her stage work, and tried to forget her soldier lover in the arms of Neuville, whom she at last married, one day in 1800.

V

MADAME (as we must call her) was now seventy, with still more vigour and more good looks than most women of half her years. At seventy-two we find her organizing opera bouffe in honour of Bonaparte's Italian victories, thus proving that she had forgiven her false lover and was generous enough to be proud of his growing fame. Five years later she was opening another theater, and taking an active part in the management of a music hall—so active, indeed, that she lost her heart—for the last time

—to a handsome young rope-dancer, who might have been her grandson.

But even Montansier could not defy Time forever, and from this time we see her rapidly lapsing into old age and infirmities until, at eighty-two, Paul de Kock describes her as "a little old woman, so old, so broken down, so wrinkled, so shriveled up that, when I first caught sight of her, I thought I beheld the fairy Carabosse."

During the three years of life that still remained we only catch one more glimpse of this wonderful woman, and this was at the funeral of Mlle. Rancourt, a famous actress. When the mourners reached the church they found the gate locked against them—the clergy had refused the dead woman Christian burial. In their anger at such an outrage on the memory of their friend, the mourners, after trying vainly to break the gate down, scaled it, lifted the coffin over it, and carried it into the aisle of the church, while an enraged mob howled outside. The curé, however, stoutly refused to conduct the funeral service, in spite of the de-

mands and threats of the mourners.

Then it was that a white-haired old woman, who was praying in a corner of the church, rose from her knees and hobbled towards him.

"What!" she exclaimed, "you would expel the poor woman's dead body from your church? And yet, when she was alive you used to promise her, as you have promised me, that eternal bliss would be the reward of her many acts of charity. Priest, I tell you, you are sowing the seeds of impiety in our hearts."

Such were the last recorded words of Montansier—words, prompted by a tender heart, spoken in defence of a woman who had once been her formidable rival in beauty and in love. And we may truly say that nothing in all her adventurous life did her so much honour as this last act of courage and nobleness which heralded the final ringing down of the curtain.

The ninth article in this series, entitled "A Witch in the Arts of Love," will appear in the next number of SMART SET.



DISCOVERY

By Maxwell Bodenheim

WITHIN your heart is a hidden pool
 Stirred to foam-covered perfumes of motion
 By naked shades of love.
 Your loves bathe in this pool of subdued desires
 And gently frolic 'neath a guardian-moon.
 Then, you become aware of them
 And with soft cries they run to their nuns' robes . . .
 All this I know because
 You smiled uncertainly, and then
 Returned to your frail sternness.



MONDAY AFTERNOON

By Jean Allen

FROM the brisk, swarming street
We climb,
Three flights of winding stairs
To this quiet, thought-filled room,
Gray-walled, with its stretch
Of soft-curtained windows
Reflecting warmth of neighbouring red brick walls,
And filling corners with rosy shadows.
The hearth fire soon is singing.
'Midst the insistent fragrance of spring flowers
You lie, relaxed and supine,
On the scarlet couch,
One tired arm trailing near the floor.
And I
Sit musedly by my green Venetian desk
While my heart expands with happiness:
A sense of gratified enjoyment
Surging near my lips
Because of the loveliness about me:
The scent of roses nodding near my hand,
The Chinese blue of this enamel box
That brings remembrance
Of slow southern seas:
My rows of vari-coloured books
That reach the ceiling,
Friends all, gathered singly on my wanderings,
And sure refuge from all unpleasantness,
The thin, blue, curling smoke
Of my cigarette,
The low sheen of the fire,
The comfort of your eyes:
Ah, Love, that we might always keep
This sanctuary of tranquillity,
Your sense of peace,
My captive heart,
And these eight green Chinese gods,
Immutable and smug, intolerant,
Triumphant on the topmost shelf,
Who tell us
Life is but a jest for lovers;
Beauty alone endures.



COMPLETION OF A POST-GRADUATE COURSE IN PHILOSOPHY

By Van Vechten Hostetter

GRAHAME GORDON, the man of sixty who would not grow old, was spending a few days in Denver, for no better reason than that it pleased his fancy. That reason, however, was quite sufficient for Grahame Gordon, which partially explains why he was not growing old.

Grahame Gordon was on his way home after a year in Japan and another year on his Montana ranch. There was no necessity for haste. No wife and no children waited for him. No affairs of business demanded his attention. He had always liked Denver, so he had stopped there, much as a man, finding himself in the neighbourhood where an acquaintance lives, drops in for a few minutes' chat.

Tonight, after a day's tramping and an evening at the theater, Grahame Gordon, with whiskey and soda at hand, sat musing at his open hotel window. The dark quietude of the room, contrasting with the glare hubbub of the street below, conduced to musing.

Grahame Gordon at thirty, having read well and thought deeply, had regarded himself—modestly—as a man of education and intelligence somewhat above the average for those of his years.

At forty-five, having observed life and lived it thoroughly in many and widely variant phases and modes in the principal cities of North America, he had considered himself a man of rare knowledge, keen perception and superior judgment.

Now, a seasoned cosmopolitan of sixty, he examined himself—objective-

ly, almost impersonally, with the same fine judicial attitude that he would have brought to the examination of another man—and found that he was more than broadly experienced and widely read, more than wise. He was a philosopher.

Grahame Gordon had no degrees. (While his school-fellows had been working for them or devising schemes to get them without work, he had decided that they were intrinsically worthless.) He had written no books. He had delivered no lectures. He had carefully avoided being developed into an "authority" by newspaper interviews (a cheap distinction religiously sought by some whose sciolism made him mildly contemptuous and enjoyed by some whose displays of unconscious ignorance afforded him many a quiet and benignant smile).

And yet certainly Grahame Gordon was deeper in philosophy than a few of those who made their living by it, and more a master than those whose minds had collapsed under the weight of their own thought. He felicitated himself upon his ability, so seldom possessed by a philosopher, to take nothing too seriously—not even himself. Professional thinkers, he had observed,—even those who professed contempt for all humanity—stood somewhat in awe of themselves.

Ruminating pleasantly now over his own life, Grahame Gordon smiled blandly and with a kind of amused paternal sympathy upon the youth he had been and at the foolish fears over which that youth had brooded for a miserable year or more. For Grahame

Gordon, before he knew the beginnings of philosophy, had been the prey of a somewhat morbid dread of death and a coordinate horror of infirm and burdensome old age. And, after the manner of phobiacs, he had diligently nourished his fears—a thing more than easy to do because of their reciprocal relation. Combatting one, he had found a morose pleasure in knowing that whatever power to harass was taken from it was given to the other.

He scanned the newspapers for reports of deaths of men and women in their prime. Their dreams were unrealized. Their ambitions were unattained. Their purposes, whether serious, ordinary or frivolous, were unaccomplished. They had wanted and hoped to live, just as he wanted and hoped. All that they had done had been only the preparation for what they were to do. Their book, epic or farce was closed with its best pages unwritten.

He brooded upon the possibility that their fate would be his until it became likelihood. Then he turned and ridiculed his reasonless despair. Those who died before their time were few enough. Those that lived on and on were many. Why should he be among the few? He was sound and strong in body. The possibility of early death for him was remote—yes, too remote. More was the likelihood that his body would go on, living somehow, breathing, hanging feebly yet tenaciously to life long after his brain had begun to decay.

He watched and followed old men of the poor, in their rusty, frayed and shapeless garments, pottering along on their canes. He saw them sitting in the sun on summer days. Some tapped irregularly on the pavement; they had lost even the sense of rhythm. Some had nervous energy and strength remaining to whittle a piece of wood, but had minds too feeble to have any purpose in the whittling. Some chattered in monotonous of petty, almost meaningless incidents and experiences of years long gone, as if those were all their

asthenic memories could retain. Some, the dying skin, yellow or brown or splotched, drying and shrinking on their bones, sat dull or vacant eyed, mumbling incoherently or silent, until their grandchildren came—hating the task—to lead them home.

It was to be like one of these, Grahame Gordon thought, that he was living. There was no joy in them. They were no longer capable of enjoying any pleasure, either of body or mind, either sinful or virtuous. They were disgustingly ugly. They were less able than children to provide themselves with personal care. They were of no use to themselves; to society they were sores on its body, irremovable concomitants of healthy life, best borne by thinking of them as little as possible; to their relatives they were loathsome burdens that should be cast off but could not be. It was immoral even to pray for deliverance, although the relatives could not help longing and hoping for it.

And these old men were not essentially different from the old men of his own class. His grandfather was like them. His grandfather had great wealth, but after a private hearing had been adjudged incompetent to have control of it. He had a nurse who bathed him, dressed him and took him to the club, where he sat gibbering with other rich old men.

And he was resisting and scheming against death, the youthful Grahame Gordon thought, shuddering, to be like these. What a horrible reward if he should succeed! And how horrible it would be to fail!

But the Grahame Gordon of tonight could smile. The youth, realizing the danger of his mental condition, had summoned all his will and attacked both his obsessing horrors at once. He had convinced himself that escape from both was possible and the man of sixty proved it.

For Grahame Gordon, examining himself without passion and without prejudice, knew that he had the body, mind and spirit of forty years. He was not like certain statesmen and men

of great affairs whose retention of mental and physical strength at threescore years and ten was the subject of remark. He knew their ruggedness in the first place was considerably magnified. He knew very well that they did not habitually lead the lives of men of forty.

He knew that a newspaper story and picture of Senator Horace Noble at golf was considered "good stuff" by newspapers, but he knew also that Senator Noble could not play golf for ten consecutive hours as he, Grahame Gordon, had done the last time he was at Southampton. He knew that for twenty years or more before his death at eighty-one, Thompson Mitchel had been only nominally the head of the powerful banking house that bore his name. With a stubborn old man's pride and vanity he had continued his regular hours in his office. This had been with the full approval of his sons, who directed the affairs of Mitchel & Company. For sentimental reasons and for psychological effect they approved. Grahame Gordon had smiled when the morning newspapers, announcing Mitchel's death, had predicted panic in the Stock Exchange. The market was unusually dull at the opening, but improved as the session proceeded and prices advanced generally.

He knew that Grant Campbell, who in an impassioned address when the *Lusitania* was sunk, had moved a mass-meeting to urge immediate declaration of war, had collapsed on the steps of his home and had not left his bed for two weeks. He knew that audiences unconsciously made allowance for Selby, the tragedian, because of his age, and that Selby was literally carried from dressing-room to stage and back again.

But Grahame Gordon had played carefully and skilfully. Death had not beaten him and time had not broken, nor even weakened his defense. He had secured himself from the dangers of matrimony by the simple method of avoiding matrimony. He had not had to worry over reckless sons or foolish

or wayward daughters. His ample patrimony, safely invested, had saved him from all business cares. He had lived, wholesomely, happily. And he was forty at sixty. His physical and mental strength, his easy view of life, his interests were all the same as they had been for twenty years. Even his personal appearance was unchanged. His healthy-coloured but not florid face bore lines of maturity, but none of age. Glasses had ceased to carry any suggestion of years long before he began to wear them. He had been gray at thirty-five.

II

ONLY one thought came tonight to mar Grahame Gordon's tranquil reflections. It was that his friends had not been such masters of life as he. Many of them had died in the last few years. Some had been only the victims of fate or chance, but more had paid the price of excessive indulgences of youth. Grahame Gordon had practiced excess in nothing. In the first few years out of the university many of his cronies had been always beastly drunk or beastly sober; Grahame Gordon had not been either. Grahame Gordon had had mistresses; but they had not had him.

There were other friends who after marriage had been weaned away or barred away from their old associates—which did not matter greatly, for they had grown dull or stupid. Others still had drifted away to nowhere, as friends will who are not too dear.

Those that remained—and they were few enough—were aging. Some had been handicapped from the beginning with bodies and minds less strong than his. Against others the law of compensation was operating relentlessly; they had denied themselves nothing, now they were rapidly moving on to the time when everything would be denied them. They had lost much of the zest for life. The shoulders of the best of them were bent. Their steps were slow. So were their wits. They were no longer the inspiring and wholly sat-

isfying companions they had been to Grahame Gordon, although they were still his friends. On his last visit home he had observed that it was not easy to take them to the theater; they preferred to sit in the club and talk—about the past. He talked of the present mostly, and often of something they knew nothing about. Once that would have been hardly possible. There was a pathos in their feigned understanding.

He had found himself turning to younger men for relief from boredom. It had been a sorry relief. These men were keen, alert, thrilling with life, capital companions for a while—but they were not old friends. They provided a mental exhilaration, but there was little spiritual comfort in their association. Some he had known for several years and spent many an evening with at the opera or in some café, many an afternoon at the track when he could find no one else to go with him; so surely they were friends, yet as surely not like those he had known since university days and after; there was an intimacy, a perfect sympathy and understanding always lacking. His spirit was as young as theirs, his mind as fresh and vigorous, his body even more erect and his step lighter than some of theirs—yet they showed him deference.

Grahame Gordon mused somewhat mournfully upon the fact that, of all the comrades he had once had, only one remained cherished deeply enough to make correspondence worth while. He was thankful for that one. John Emberlie, too, had begun to fail; yet he was fighting bravely, gallantly—and against odds, for he had been the most heedless of the gay—to be the kind of man Grahame Gordon was finding it so easy to be. Well, it would be worth the trip back to grip hands with poor old Emberlie and drink with him again. What a thrill of joy it must have given the old man to receive Grahame Gordon's wire, saying he was coming back.

A knock on his door roused Grahame Gordon from his now less pleasant reflections. It was a bellboy with a telegram.

"It's from Emberlie," Grahame Gordon said as he tore open the envelope. "Good old Emberlie answering. He's the only one that knows where I am."

He adjusted his glasses and stood under the hall light, staring at the message.

Something gripped and pinched his heart.

It was from Emberlie's man.

Emberlie was dead.

III

GRAHAME GORDON had no heart to go back. His grief was great enough without being made more poignant by a visit to the scenes where he and his best friend had made merry so soon after that friend had died. He went to Rio de Janeiro, and thence to Buenos Aires, and thence to London.

It was nearly five years later that he went home—back to New York—impelled by a growing hunger for old scenes and old companions that had somewhat suddenly possessed him.

He found he had not been forgotten. He was greeted at his favourite club and others with wholesome cordiality, but cordiality in which there was an unmistakable deference. There was no one here to call him Grahame, no one to call him Gordon without "Mister" prefixed. Not one of the men he had hoped most to see, withered and feeble as they might be, remained. He was deeply disappointed and experienced a feeling of loneliness, but he was not dismayed; for he was still a philosopher and still young.

For such comfort as it would bring Grahame Gordon set out to visit the streets, cafés and places of amusement where he and his comrades had once been familiar figures. The streets remained, but only the streets. Everything else was changed. Even the great hotels that had not been razed to make room for greater had been altered, rebuilt and renovated almost beyond recognition. Not one of the old attachés was to be found about any of them.

"What ever became of Jimmie

Moore?" he asked experimentally of the bartender in Delmonico's.

The man responded dully that he knew no one of the name.

"Why," said Grahame Gordon, "he used to be the greatest bartender in town thirty-five years ago. Invented the Queens cocktail—you know that?"

"Oh, sure, but I never knew who got it up."

"Well, he was an artist," Grahame Gordon said reminiscently. "I drank one of the first he ever made—and I can almost taste it now."

The man smiled with a professional bartender's good-natured diplomacy.

"I hand it to you," he said. "You must have started good and early."

"Yes," said Grahame Gordon wearily, "I started early," and went his way.

Grahame Gordon found a capable Jap and opened an apartment, which he meant to keep a year before another sojourn abroad. When the end of that year came he found he had no taste for traveling, so he stayed on. After all, there was nothing to see in Europe that he had not seen again and again, nothing to hear. There was nothing to do that he could not do at home. He satisfied himself with three months at the shore. It was as pleasant to be there as anywhere else.

When he returned he set himself determinedly to make new friends as fully satisfying as the old ones had been. His progress was slow if indeed he made any progress. He read every newspaper and every magazine and book that was worth while. There was not a play—good, bad or indifferent—that he did not see, not an opera that he failed to hear. He knew the record and the history of every baseball player and the name of every horse that had showed class or promised to show it. He played golf and cricket. He skated.

In the clubs no wise man, wit or raconteur was more engaging or brilliant than he. Few were his equals. Yet those equals would not meet him on a plane of equality.

With his clear vision he could not

fail to see that they regarded him as in some way different from themselves. The attention with which they listened to what he had to say was too respectful. Their rejoinders were accompanied by something like apologies. He was keen for repartee that gave and asked no quarter. So were they among themselves, but their retorts to him were softened—for him.

Sometimes at the height of some learned and witty debate someone would forget his deference for a minute or two—but then he would catch himself and awkwardly end his remark, thereafter sitting silent and embarrassed. Then Grahame Gordon would wonder if he had actually made any progress toward the position among these men that he had held among men thirty years before.

IV

MONTHS followed months into years and Grahame Gordon, fighting with indomitable courage and undiminished strength, began to wonder if he was not fighting in vain. He wondered if, after all, he was not struggling to accomplish the impossible. If so, then he was willing to resign, for he was a philosopher; but he could not resign while doubt remained, for he was still a man.

Why could he not be taken at his true value? he asked himself again and again. Why must he be regarded according to the number of years he had lived and not according to the qualities and talents he possessed?

What fools men were, he thought, to be so blind to truth before their eyes! But surely they could not remain blind forever.

Surely there were men whose minds were free, men who could be convinced that he was essentially like them. Surely there were men who would let him, even help him, break down the false barrier of mere years and be comrades with him.

But Grahame Gordon, when he was ninety-three years old, had found not one such man. Incredible as it had

once seemed that he should do so, he had retained all the faculties and all the spirit of healthy middle age more than twenty years beyond the scripturally allotted span of life. It had been incredible to him until the demonstration of it was well begun. To everyone else, despite the perfect demonstration, it was still incredible.

Although he still struggled to be taken for what he was, still schemed and planned to come heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind with men who had hearts and minds like his, they still held up the barrier of the years. Another generation had come up now. They were more than deferential. They venerated or revered him. When he approached they fell silent, rose and greeted him decorously and remained standing until he was seated. They listened with respectful attention to all he said; smiled half-fearfully at his dry humor, not knowing whether it was right to smile or not; refused to argue with him, but humbly asked him simple questions.

He wanted to be a fellow with them: they would make him nothing but a patriarch. He wondered what they said of him behind his back. For all their reverence he would have had one of them slap him on the shoulder with a boisterous greeting; but none could think of such a thing.

Grahame Gordon himself had never had the habit of slapping shoulders, but he wondered if anything could be gained by adopting it now. He decided not. It would be regarded—and rightly so, he decided—as a silly old man's effort to make himself appear young. He did, however, put aside his cane. It had come to carry a suggestion of decrepitude. The really old men that sat in the clubs all day hobbled to them on canes. They were the men of whom he had tried in vain to make comrades after Emberlie died. They were too old to be comrades now.

It was when Grahame Gordon was nearing ninety-five that some newspaper sent a man to interview him and get his photograph. He came as near to

losing his temper as his philosophical mind would permit.

"I have no photograph," he said simply, "and I have nothing of importance to say. I'm sorry."

The newspaperman was insistent.

"I told you I was sorry," said Grahame Gordon. "I am a private citizen, minding my own business, and such I wish and intend to remain."

The thought of the practices of certain unscrupulous newspapers flashed into his mind and he added forcefully:

"I warn you that my wish must be respected. Publish nothing about me."

All this the reporter told to his city editor and asked:

"Shall I fake it?"

"No," said the city editor, "not on an old man like that. Let him alone."

A few nights later Grahame Gordon sat in a favorite little room of his at the club, waiting for a young man who had promised to play chess with him. As the time of the appointment approached his sharp ear caught voices in the corridor:

"Come on with us. Everybody will be there. There's going to be a lot of quiet fun."

"No. Sorry I can't, old man; but I've got to play some chess with old Mr. Gordon."

In a few minutes they were at play. Grahame Gordon was sick at heart and half angry. He played mercilessly. He did not stop at beating his opponent. He humiliated him. But still, when they said good night, he was "old Mr. Gordon."

V

IN the weeks that followed Grahame Gordon fought against a bitterness in his heart. Life was so unjust. Surely it was unjust. His judgment of it must be fair. He had fought and won and yet he had lost. He drove away the bitterness, but the knowledge of injustice remained. Now he must become reconciled to that injustice. So he was thinking when he got up one evening to start home. He was seen to stumble

and fall. Half a dozen men and servants ran toward him, shouting. He was on his feet before they reached him. They were greatly agitated and alarmed.

"Are you hurt, Mr. Gordon?"—"Can't I help you?"—these and other anxious questions.

He laughed lightly. "Good Lord, no. Of course I'm not hurt. Thanks. I just tripped over that rug—the edge was turned up."

It was the truth, but as Grahame Gordon strode home through the night he knew that nobody believed it. For many hours he sat in his bedroom, thinking deeply, more deeply perhaps than he had ever thought before.

He thought as a philosopher. He was calm in mind and spirit. There was no bitterness in him now. He sought truth and he was reconciled to it, whatever the truth might be.

"It would have been better, after all, if I had lived like other men," he thought. "It would have been better if I had died like other men or grown old. I have tried to break the law of nature, to destroy it—and I have only violated it. The law stands. Decline and death are as natural as birth and life. Strange

I never realized it before. Science may change the law by gradually lengthening the years of man—and that may solve all the world's problems—but no one man can change it. I have tried to be a normal man beyond the normal time. Impossible—because the world and life and nature will not let it be possible. It would have been natural to die of disease—or to grow old and feeble and die; but I am, after all, what that poor wise fool of an editor instinctively knew me to be—a freak of nature. And what am I to do now?"

That was the question that took the hours to answer.

Grahame Gordon was never seen again in any of his clubs. He dismissed his servant, gave up his apartment and went away. No one knew where he went. Some wondered. None tried to find out.

Some months later a stranger in a far inland town was found dead in his room in the hotel. He had taken a potent poison that had left no unsightly mark or sign on his clean, strong body. The man was apparently forty-five or fifty years old. He had registered as "John Smith, of London." The coroner's jury decided that he had ended his life while temporarily insane.



THERE are only two kinds of kisses one remembers: those which remind one of cold veal, and those which are like a glass of champagne with a touch of angostura.



SPOTLIGHT: a scheme of illumination for showing up impartially all the spots on a vaudeville actor's dress suit.



THE worst thing that can be said about love is that it makes marriage possible.



UNEASY lies the head that wears a conscience.

AN UPLIFT STORY

By Frank La Forrest

DINING, wining and dancing had finally palled on the guests, and as a novelty the hostess suggested a bit of sociological pastime.

Let us go out in the streets, pick up the first drunken man we meet and try and reform him," she suggested.

They sallied forth and after traveling several blocks saw a man lying in the gutter.

They rushed up eagerly, but the hostess' face fell. She did not deny that he was delightfully drunk, but as for reforming him—she held up her hands. He was her husband.



EMOTION BOURGEOISE

By John V. A. Weaver

YOU thought it was the Spring. The river crinkled
Like creamy ribbon in the moon's incandescence.
The stage was set. Here was the very essence
Of middle-class Romance: some far bell tinkled.

And down a warm wind came a sudden flood
Of—lilac! Then you shuddered as my lips
Brushed on your cheek, your hair, your finger-tips. . . .
And, "Don't!" you said, "I'm just not in the mood."

You wrenched away, laughed a self-conscious titter,
Spoke some banal something about the Spring,
Entered the doorway with a little fling,
Leaving me somewhat flustered, somewhat bitter.

Twenty! And May! (And several years ago—
Hell! . . . That the scent of lilac should hurt so. . . .)



WINGS IN THE MESH

A COLLOQUY IN ONE ACT

By Milnes Levick

IT is the living room of a small suburban home, almost paid for. The living room is distinguished from its parent, the parlor, by Mission furniture and a different fashion in accessibility to fresh air: the type is, indeed, a superior triumph of machinery. In this example one may search the furniture, the hangings, the adornments, for a touch of intimacy and find no more than an occasional misplacement of accident or slovenliness. The hornless phonograph holds its station, the chairs stand sentry, the table is a citadel. From immutable positions on the top shelf of a built-in rack two rigid sets and a dozen old novels stare self-consciously through small ornate panes. Below, in tattered envelopes, are the phonograph records, banalities indiscriminately of vaudeville and of the opera. There are pictures, some printed trivialities, a large engraving in the manner of an etching, with anecdotal remarque, circa 1895; a slaty oil painting, work of a deceased aunt; a framed line of photographs, like a row of teeth, showing two children in obvious and slightly varied poses.

The room is of a piece with the bungalow, with the street, with the suburb. Beyond the lace curtains are other houses, precise and patterned, as impersonal as cheap motor cars—rows reaching out for miles.

Upon the table is a woman's hat, now cocked defiantly upon the edge of a handbag. Two long pins are stuck in it at reckless angles; their glass tips glare wall-eyed at the stolid lamp; they thrust themselves forward with wary belligerence like antennae.

By the table is a strait, in which a big chair makes an island, now inhabited by Mrs. Meddock in a dingy house gown. Upon the other side of the room, purposely distant as if to emphasize the atmosphere of tenseness, is her elder daughter, Sophie Stark. The younger, Ruth Henshaw, in street dress like her sister, but hatless, slumps on a settee and the drape of the phonograph box brushes her hair.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, you're not going to do this?
I won't allow it.

SOPHIE:

Why, you're just playing into his
hands. Can't you see. . . .

RUTH:

(After a pause.) See what?

SOPHIE:

That you're just making a fool of
yourself to please him.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You won't throw away your rights
like this?

RUTH:

Rights? If it's over it's over, isn't
it?

*Copyright, 1919, by the author.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Over! Well, of all—

SOPHIE:

How can you talk so?

RUTH:

Oh, I know: what God joins together. Well, I guess he didn't do the joining himself in our case.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You shan't talk so before me, Ruth, whether you think it's smart or not. My dear, don't you suppose I can see how you feel at heart? Do you think to fool your mother? My poor child—

RUTH:

Not now, mother, please. You don't understand.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But you speak as if it were a joke.

RUTH:

It's harder than you have any idea.

SOPHIE:

A mighty poor joke.

RUTH:

Easy enough for you to talk, Sophie. Your husband—

SOPHIE:

But if you do this he'll only just go on the same way, over and over; it's this woman now; then it will be someone else, and so on, and where will it end?

RUTH:

Maybe; what of it?

THE OTHER TWO:

What of it!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

That's in very poor taste, Ruth.

RUTH:

I'm not thinking about good taste. I'm thinking of life.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

When you've lived as long—

SOPHIE:

Does life mean that a man can go on getting rid of one wife after another as he pleases?

RUTH:

Sometimes, in some places.

SOPHIE:

But if it's like that, we might as well—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

What's religion for, and civilization?

RUTH:

Oh, come: I didn't say Martin would.

SOPHIE:

I'd like to give him a piece of my mind!

RUTH:

Don't you suppose he knows it?

SOPHIE:

Then if he has got some remnant of conscience why don't you—

RUTH:

Not conscience—not your kind of conscience. "Ruth," he said, "I ask you to follow your own mind no matter where it may lead, and if those"—what was it? Oh, "morality mongers"; yes. He said, "If those morality mongers start up like sausage grinders—"

MRS. MEDDOCK:

There is no need to repeat it. I've always known his dislike of us.

SOPHIE:

I'm glad he feels that way.

RUTH:

He called you termagants, too.

(She smiles provocatively. Mrs. Meddock straightens, setting her mouth; Sophie assumes the air of one whose adversary's perfidy has been revealed.)

RUTH:

And he said I must know he had loved me because he'd let me bring him to the family reunions every Christmas.

SOPHIE:

I see nothing for you to laugh at, Ruth.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Whimpering.*) Indeed, I'm not laughing—

RUTH:

Do you think I am?

(*She jumps up; her fingers pick at the thumb of each hand.*)

SOPHIE:

Then why do you give in?

RUTH:

Give in! What good to go on making believe, with nothing but unhappiness? The truth can be beautiful, even if it is bitter.

SOPHIE:

You're crazy.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But there's never been anything like that in the family. Oh, it seems as if everything was coming to pieces. There's nothing right anywhere. Think of what people will say.

RUTH:

It would have frightened me, before. But all that seems so foolish; all these people who talk—they're just like a nest of scurrying ants to me now.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But, my dear! One can't set aside the whole world like that. And you'll find it so.

RUTH:

The world comes after you sharp enough. It's always talking about the divorce evil, and it knows that the trouble's really the marriage evil.

SOPHIE:

One can brazen out a disgrace like—

RUTH:

Disgrace, Sophie?

SOPHIE:

What do you call it, then? Divorce,
SS—July—7

another woman, you can't tell how much more!

RUTH:

It's not disgrace to me, but just trying to keep life honest.

SOPHIE:

I'd call it that.

RUTH:

And I'd call your kind of life disgrace.

SOPHIE:

Well!

RUTH:

Oh, don't pretend. You know what I mean. You laughed at me years ago when I said it was immoral for a man and woman to live together if they weren't in love. I think so yet.

SOPHIE:

It's lucky for the world it doesn't agree with you. . . . Besides, Herbert and I love each other very dearly.

RUTH:

Oh, yes. I know: why, you've been together so long you're even beginning to look alike, but is that what love means to you?

SOPHIE:

Maybe you know better than I do what it really is.

RUTH:

Sneer if you want to, but I do and that's why—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, don't aggravate your sister.

SOPHIE:

She's not. But there are some things—

RUTH:

Love! My God, what do *you* know of love?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Don't talk so. I won't have it. Is blasphemy a part of what you're doing?

RUTH:

Oh, your religion doesn't bother me any more—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

We're not church people, it's true, but at least we're ready to acknowledge that it wouldn't do us any harm to go now and then.

RUTH:

Not any harm. It just wouldn't touch you.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Well, things have changed a good deal since I was young.

SOPHIE:

Not so much, mother.

RUTH:

More than you can ever imagine. Half the world's freed.

SOPHIE:

There are rights and duties that go back thousands of years—

RUTH:

To the cave dwellers. We are advancing, aren't we?

SOPHIE:

You married so young, and all his ideas—

RUTH:

You can say what you like about him, but he's got more—

SOPHIE:

What's the use of talking this way? Make a fool of yourself. Go ahead. But I do wish you'd pick out some way that wouldn't blacken our name.

RUTH:

The name's all you think of. Did you ever look any further?

SOPHIE:

I hate him.

RUTH:

You're afraid of him.

SOPHIE:

Pooh!

(There is a hiatus. Presently Sophie renews the attack.)

SOPHIE:

I don't think you realize what this means. Everyone's disappointed, Ruth, to some extent. One marries for better or for worse. . . . None of us is perfect. I daresay it's hard for Herbert to put up with me sometimes. And he isn't always what I'd like. But we're not rushing off to the divorce court. People don't do that. We have to take things as they are.

RUTH:

But you won't face them. I'm taking life as it comes to me. What's the use of lying when everyone knows you are and doesn't care, except for the amusement of it, because they're too busy lying themselves.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(Righteously.) Some people—why, your father and I—

RUTH:

You cried all through the first year you were married. Every day for a whole year. (Mrs. Meddock stiffens and makes a gesture of reproach.) I know it. Sophie knows it. Children hear such things when they grow up. At our age parents are human beings. You cried because you were disappointed. Then you stopped. He hadn't changed: you had. You'd started to make a truth out of your lie. You've only made a lie out of your truth.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(Wounded, but with a tremor of gratitude for this tardy comprehension; she turns to the elder girl protestingly.) Sophie? . . .

(Sophie says nothing; she looks steadily but with constraint at her sister. At seeing her mother forced thus to pay she feels faintly a repressed and jealous cruelty, whose recognition would pain and shock her.)

RUTH:

I can't make the facts over; I won't

risk what's left by pretending. That's why I'm going to a lawyer tomorrow.

SOPHIE:

Martin's acting shamefully.

RUTH:

His love for—for her, is real. It's as honest as his love for me was. It's bound to be recognized. What's the good of trying to shut it in a closet. I only wish I could. God! I wish I could.

SOPHIE:

But you're letting your whole life be—

RUTH:

It's got to be made over, Sophie: I could lie, but you can't change life any more than you can make the sun set by closing your eyes.

SOPHIE:

You must make your own life.

RUTH:

Have you made yours, or mother her?

"Take the world as you find it," you say, and "make your own life." Which—

SOPHIE:

Make the most of your chances at any rate.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You can force Martin—

RUTH:

Blackmail him. Thank Heaven—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But how will you live? Your father's getting old; he can't—

RUTH:

He won't have to, mother. But I won't try to compel Martin. There's no need to. Perhaps. . . . No, I don't want any help. I can earn my own living.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Yes, you'll have to.

SOPHIE:

What at?

RUTH:

Other women do it.

SOPHIE:

But you could make him pay. What are laws for?

RUTH:

They're weapons. I love him. He may not love me as he used to, but—
(*she puts her handkerchief to her mouth.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

(*Rising, comforts her in silence a moment.*) I must go to the kitchen. Your father—

(*For a space the sisters, alone, do not speak.*)

RUTH:

It will be hard, going to court. The thought of it makes me feel like a shipwrecked sailor in a court of savages.

SOPHIE:

Ruth, you're a fool. I would no more let Herbert—

RUTH:

You knew what you were getting when you married him. You could see the years straight ahead, with never anything around the corner. It used to make me sad to see that you could. And there has never been any corner for you.

SOPHIE:

Is that what you really think? . . .
(*Their gaze joins for five seconds.*)

RUTH:

Sophie, not you, too?

SOPHIE:

No, Ruth; I won't permit it. And he knows it.

RUTH:

But it doesn't seem worth while. Love is a giving. If one must fight—

SOPHIE:

You're still a romantic girl. Haven't you found out married life isn't love?

RUTH:

Then I want no married life! I can't say it now: it never seemed to make any real difference if we were married or not.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, do you defend this libertine even now, against your own mother?

RUTH:

If you knew how I want your understanding! Not sympathy, that you'd give a hurt dog, but just a word to make me feel that I wasn't standing all alone in my world.

SOPHIE:

I said from the beginning he had an evil effect on you.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Maybe this is just a lark of his, Ruth. Men go on so sometimes. Maybe he'll come back and you can go on just as if nothing had happened.

RUTH:

As if nothing had happened. . . .

SOPHIE:

If it's possible? Why not wait?

RUTH:

Don't you suppose we have waited till there's no use waiting any longer?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But how can a man know? You're such a child—

RUTH:

He knows. I know.

SOPHIE:

You're full of illusions.

RUTH:

No illusions. They've all melted.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Maybe when he's had his fling—

RUTH:

I can take what's left?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

A wife should know how to forgive.

RUTH:

Forgive the rain for falling.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

I've seen much more than—

RUTH:

You haven't seen anything, mother. You don't want to. You take little pieces of fact and try to fit them like pieces of a puzzle instead of simply taking them for what they are. You think he's wrong because he didn't lie; you tell me I'm weak, when I'm using every bit of strength I can gather to see it all through without any pretending. It's so much easier to make believe.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Sometimes one has to compromise with life.

RUTH:

You mean let life cheat you.

SOPHIE:

What's all this talk of not pretending? You seem as anxious as he is.

RUTH:

When I came here today I didn't know what I'd say, how I'd explain. I was still numb from it all. But you've made it clear. There's only this way.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

If you didn't sue, what would he—

RUTH:

Oh, that doesn't matter. I suppose I've given him cause enough, if he wants to. Cruelty's so—

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But surely—

RUTH:

Which side gets the decree is just a matter of courtesy.

SOPHIE:

Well, I'm glad you're going to make them pay, anyway.

RUTH:

I didn't say that.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Not? Why not?

SOPHIE:

Why, you just said—

RUTH:

I don't want any spite work. What have I to do with her?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Hasn't she—?

RUTH:

She thinks she's right.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Ruth, it's your duty; you may save some other wife by making an example—

RUTH:

By frightening some man into cheap little lies, because he hasn't the courage to think it out for himself. I'd feel as if all his sneaking lies were my own sins. They would be.

SOPHIE:

You'll find sentimental charity like that doesn't work in real life. (*Ruth denies the definition with a wave of the hand.*) This crazy notion—now, Ruth: seriously, aren't you going to do yourself simple justice and show them up? Oh, but you should make them suffer, too!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

They ought to be made to pay.

RUTH:

I'm going to do what I think's right.

SOPHIE:

The blame's his.

RUTH:

It's not a matter for blame.

SOPHIE:

There'll be talk, anyway; you might as well.

RUTH:

"If I don't somebody will." And you talk of pride, Sophie!

SOPHIE:

That doesn't shock me. Sometimes. . . . But see where it's brought you. How many couples are what you'd call happy?

RUTH:

Oh, I suppose there never was a man and wife who didn't have plenty of cause for divorce, on both sides.

SOPHIE:

Marriage is a woman's business. You must never let him forget for a moment (*Ruth shudders*) or the first passing fancy—

RUTH:

It's better to let him go than to be forever parading—

SOPHIE:

Well, you're letting him go, without raising a finger.

RUTH:

We've not been happy. Things have changed so completely . . . so slowly, like the hands of a clock. There's so much to look back on, but the beautiful days that seem only yesterday—they were all so far back; three years, four, five. It seemed to me sometimes life had stopped, but it was always going to begin again. Now . . . Life is so funny. . . . I just hurt mother. She doesn't realize.

SOPHIE:

How do you mean, realize, Ruth? It seems to me quite plain, like black and white. If a man acts as he's acting, throwing you over, snapping his fingers at his duty— Oh! how can you stand it? You may have been to blame in letting him get out of hand, but why don't you assert yourself now? I'd like to horsewhip him.

RUTH:

He came to me, Sophie, and told me all about it, like a friend.

SOPHIE:

The cur!

RUTH:

But he said he wanted no dishonesty.

SOPHIE:

Bah! He might have spared you that much.

RUTH:

And lied to me?

SOPHIE:

Why didn't he go his way decently and quietly, instead of blurting it all out that way? Why couldn't he keep it to himself: he could have done as he pleased, and you'd never have known.

RUTH:

What good?

SOPHIE:

Wouldn't that have smoothed things over? Wouldn't it have let you keep up appearances, instead of having your home blown to pieces, your whole life—

RUTH:

Bother appearances!

SOPHIE:

Well, that's the way most of us have to live.

RUTH:

And you're jealous of those who won't.

SOPHIE:

If they don't conform, let them take the consequences.

RUTH:

Very well.

SOPHIE:

There, there. It's not you so much: you're just a poor little—

RUTH:

I'm frightened, I know. So would you be if you had an earthquake.

SOPHIE:

I know my rights. No earthquake of that kind could harm me.

RUTH:

No, you wouldn't let it.

SOPHIE:

It makes my blood boil to see a woman submit meekly to—

(*Mrs. Meddock returns from the kitchen.*)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

I'm sorry, Ruth, but your father will be here any minute, and you know what he is if he has to wait dinner. . . . Oh, (*Taking seat*) it doesn't seem as if it could be.

RUTH:

Let's not begin all over again. We've been going round and round.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But we must talk this over thoroughly, Ruth. You mustn't do anything till—

RUTH:

I've looked at it from every side.

SOPHIE:

He went and told her all about it, right out!

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Oh!

SOPHIE:

I don't see how she stood it. There are some things women have to take and smile if they can. One can expect those. But for a man to come and say—

RUTH:

Would you prefer Herbert to go to you slyly, with lies too childish to offer or to accept without shame?

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You must learn—

SOPHIE:

One can shut one's eyes and still keep something—more than you've kept with all your fine talk.

RUTH:

You're not afraid of the thing; it's the name that frightens you. Your whole existence is built around names and not things. And now you sit here and pretend to be shocked, and lecture me and pose, and wish for horsewhips, because something too big for you has touched the edge of your life.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

You don't lack excuses, Ruth.

RUTH:

I don't want any.

SOPHIE:

Oh, you're not a woman! Haven't you a spark of revenge?

RUTH:

Maybe it's my better nature.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

How can you laugh?

RUTH:

Oh, it's not a funeral. . . . It's a birth. That's pain, but it needn't be made mean and dirty. And if it is pain, you can't escape it.

(They sit a moment in irksome silence. Ruth rises.)

RUTH:

I'm going.

MRS. MEDDOCK:

But your father—

RUTH:

I couldn't stand him now.

(To Mrs. Meddock this is the ultimate of delinquency. Ruth puts on her hat with care: she is secretly exultant. Sophie, baffled, does not rise.)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Well, Ruth—

(Suddenly Ruth, without a word, dashes to the door, slams it, and is gone. The two women listen with offended stolidity to the repercussion, then ruminate in a silence that speaks. Presently Mrs. Meddock stirs.)

MRS. MEDDOCK:

Don't tell papa, Sophie . . . not before dinner.

SOPHIE:

No . . . Poor papa.

(A man's precise and heavy footsteps are heard approaching on the sidewalk.)



A CHANT

By Charles Glendon

GOD did not make me especially beautiful.
 He did not make me especially witty.
 He did not make me especially brave.
 He did not make me especially rich.
 He did not make me especially good.

In fact, He just made me.
 But, thank God, He made me young.



E PLURIBUS UNUM

By Dennison Varr

HE was on the whole an ideal husband. Indeed, when she reviewed his personality with her critical insight she was conscious of a great many virtues and only one defect—and that defect was mitigated by the fact that it was more or less involuntary. He had delirium tremens regularly.



TO ONE IN FAVOUR

By Djuna Barnes

WHEN the throne stands empty, and the king goes down,
Down into the darkness by your high white tent,
And shall sheath his gray sword, lay aside his crown;
Then, O tall white woman, shall you be content?

Shall you be contented, lying on his knee,
Murmuring face downward, lips within his palm?
Then shall you remember, thus you once kissed me,
Only wilder, madder, closer in my arm?

When he shall release you, turn his eyes to sleep;
Will you lift a little, looking in his face,
And recall our parting, for a moment weep
Down upon his doublet, tarnishing the lace?

And when up the sun rides, and the daylight comes,
Loud with sudden sparrows, and their latest talk,
Will you take his face so, in your two long thumbs
Kiss his mouth for kindness, then rise up and walk?



THE LITTLE GRAND DUCHESS

By Solita Solano

SINCE the grand duchess was so tiny that she looked like a French doll in her white lace coats and fur-trimmed silk bonnets she had been taught to be fastidious. Her person, companions, books and food were all subjected to a sterilizing process that was as relentless as it was frequent. A great marriage was intended for her and she was never permitted to forget that, until this event, her life must be spent in preparation for her proud position.

Her mind was trained as gracefully—and as inadequately—as her body. For the science and economics she lacked there were the piano, embroidery, a little painting, languages, etiquette and charming manners—in fact, everything that would not tend to make her discontented in the coming rôle of pleasant companion during the first months of matrimony and, subsequently, a satisfactory producer of kinglets and princelings. Having no more native intelligence than usually accompanies royal blood, the little grand duchess concentrated amiably on a certain look she had been told was “spirituelle,” an aloofness of bearing and—above all else—the integrity of her person.

She neither gave nor received kisses. She considered them vulgar—when she thought of them at all. Nor did she indulge in hand-claspings, embraces of any pre-adolescent emotions whatever. The common need for affection she claimed not to understand. And as she had been taught, so she prated, “My first kiss shall be for my husband”—a sentiment her mother and elder sisters applauded

until she grew quite priggish on the subject.

When she was about thirteen years old and growing very beautiful, she became devoted to meditation and prayer before her especial ikon. She would gaze at the gently swaying flames of the candles on either side of the holy image and deplore the failings of humanity. Sometimes she even prostrated herself to pray for some erring servant whose love sin had reached her ears—for even the daughter of a great ruler may overhear a whispered scandal much in the same way as the curious child of the bourgeoisie.

Until she was past her sixteenth birthday the little grand duchess prayed more and more fervently, without, however, having any particular blessing in mind. And her innocent young soul would have been shocked and angered to its depths had the court physician told her the meaning of these religious ecstasies. And then she fell suddenly and helplessly in love.

Nature did not consult her about this nor allow her to select an eligible *parti* upon whom to bestow her first love. He was the son of her mother's second cousin, a nobody at court but a personable youth with merry blue eyes and wavy hair. He captured her fancy at first glance. Had the child experienced the usual youthful affairs of the heart she might not have taken the chills and fevers of love so seriously. But in her first suffering she felt convinced that Serge was sent her by heaven.

This trust led her to her mother. Serge, she explained, was the husband she desired, rather than that other uninteresting plan for her future of which

she had so often heard. She was willing to oblige her parents in all reasonable matters but in love—ah, in love one must choose for oneself. Surely her mother could understand and would explain it to her father. Then they could be married at once and go to live in the country.

The royal parents were more amused than alarmed. Yet precautions in such cases were never to be scorned. Thus Serge was brought to leave the palace that very day without making his farewells, lest in some unguarded moment he might touch the hand or lips of their unsullied treasure.

The little grand duchess wept unceasingly for many nights. Then pale and quiet she went about her life as before, more pious and more aloof than ever.

That year a great war was unleashed. At first it raged far away and then as the months passed it came nearer.

Discontent grew apace among the people. The father of the little grand duchess spent days and nights in conference with mysterious foreign envoys whose guttural pronunciation of French annoyed one's ears. The royal family withdrew from public sight as resentful subjects grew bolder and more unrestrained of speech. And thus they lived more and more fearfully as bad news arrived with increasing frequency.

Then like the bursting of a volcano, came a revolution. A blood-lusting mob pursued and slew all persons of wealth or power. The royal family fled to an unused castle where they waited in terror for whatever was to come. Luxurious comforts which formerly had been inseparable from their daily life now could not be provided by their dazed retainers. The fastidious little grand duchess, annoyed by dust and disorder, commanded that clean linen be brought to her apartment and draped over walls and furniture that no cobweb might touch her shining hair or fleck of dust stain skin or garment. She ordered hot water for her morning bath just as if the daily routine had not been interrupted and, despite the risk, a ser-

vant went back to the terrorized city to fetch cologne, lotions and fresh linen.

One night a great noise was heard outside the castle. A band of sweating men, half crazed by war and drink, broke down the gates and swarmed at the castle's doors. With rough torches held aloft in hands foul with dried blood and muck, they smelled out the royal family almost at once with a keen scent for such delicate game.

The little grand duchess was huddled with her parents and sisters when they forced the library door with harsh cries. She saw a knife flash over her father's head and heard her sisters scream as coarse arms seized them. Eluding a pair of thick hands, she fled down a corridor and gained her room. She barred the door and fell on her face, gasping and praying and trying not to hear the running feet outside and the shrieks of her sisters.

Heavy blows began to rain on the door. Voices demanded entrance. An iron bar presently smashed in the panels and an ape-like forearm pushed its way through the splintered wood and threw back the bolts. Its owner, powerful and without reverence, was the first to enter. His boots left smudges where he stepped. A dozen hulks of men followed him in. Their small, terrible eyes were half covered by the locks of hair that grew almost to their eyebrows.

With coarse jests they approached her, one by one—the fastidious little grand duchess whose finger tips were too sacred for the second cousin's son.

Her shining hair became roughened and wet with the sweat of her captors. That dainty skin which had never known a flaw showed ugly red splotches. Purple welts and bruises appeared on the slim young throat. Her screams died to moans which grew fainter and fainter.

Mercifully, she died before the end. Before dawn they carried the bodies of the little grand duchess and her sisters to a precipice's edge. Without compunction, they flung them, filthy and broken, into space.

THE AREA OF A CYLINDER

By N. G. Caylor

NO one could deny that Mr. E. had advanced. He had entered Hoit and Crawford's as a billing machine operator, which, I believe, is low in the scale of book-keeping. Today he had the privilege of signing his name in the blank left by the typist under the words "Ass't Credit Manager," which in itself was proof positive that he had not remained in one place.

And yet, if one had mentioned this fact to the very men who had promoted him—young Mr. Crawford, or Mr. Hoit's secretary, who, they say, can twist Mr. Hoit around his little finger—they would have smiled indulgently, and said, "Yes, yes—he's a painstaking young man." And if you had asked the girls in the stenographic department, who, after all, are the most interested in promotions, they would have looked at you vaguely and said, "Oh, him,—yeh, I guess so—"

Which shows that he had somehow slipped into his present place without much trumpet-sounding. One knew that no one had ever slapped him on the back and said, "Well, Eckersall, we're going to give you M.'s place."

No, he had probably wormed and worked his way along, doing more every day, and the promotions and salary increases had probably crept behind.

Today, as I have said, he was Assistant Credit Manager, but he had no aplomb to suit the dignity of his title. He still walked with jerky long strides down the aisle, his feet ahead of him in their constant haste, his eyes rapt on their goal.

"He steps like he was measuring out the floor," Miss Tate, one of the stenog-

raphers, once said, with a derisive curl of the lips.

And Mabel, the little dictaphone girl, had added, giggling, "or choppin' wood or sumpin'."

When he was busy at his desk, Mr. E. was very studious in his thin-lipped, painstaking way. He had no snappy ways. He couldn't read a letter with a quick comprehensive glance, slap it down, and turn to someone with peremptory decisiveness. Instead, he would figure each paper with slow attention, finally become absorbed in the problem it presented and wake only with a start to discover someone waiting to speak to him. Even then, his glance would be preoccupied, and his pale blue eyes vaguely troubled as he listened.

Sometimes his disturber would be the multigraph girl, sometimes a typist, less often, it was Minden, the credit manager. His stenographer never came to him. In his quiet, obliging way, Mr. E. had formed the habit of going to her desk and reading dictation to her from prepared notes. Usually, when he had finished dictating, he would walk away without glancing at her. Sometimes, when he remembered, he smiled a hasty, kind smile in her direction. In fact, he smiled on everyone when he remembered to do it,—on the multigraph girl, on the typist, and even on the little clerk from the Look-Up department, although she distinctly annoyed him, with her glistening mass of curls, and the little toss of the head which he distastefully felt to be coquettish.

But his kindness made no more impression on the office force than his quiet success had done. The force remained disinterestedly unimpressed. He

was just "Mr. E." to the errand boys, "Mr. E." to the typists, "Mr. E." to his stenographer,—a detached figure seated at the third desk from the plate glass windows in front.

And yet, beneath Mr. E.'s unpretentious kindness, his self-effacement, his abstraction, there was a fine warm glow of self-appreciation. He felt that he had not worked for nothing, that he was a success, that he was important to Hoit and Crawford's, that he was indispensable to the Credit Department.

His was the complacency of hard work. He was always the first to arrive in the morning; he was already deep in his work at the close of the noon hour when Minden began reluctantly to close his morning paper; during the seasonal inventory rush he did not scorn to work overtime or even lend a hand with the billing machines. And if out of his painstaking labor there had come a consciousness of his own worth, so this sense of self-importance buoyed him up and helped him to do more every day..

The day after New Year's, Mr. E. was already deep in an analysis of credits granted to small-town merchants, while most of the office was relapsing with a sigh into the office routine, and the typewriters clicked occasionally and desultorily.

Hm—he had allowed the zeal of his sales-promotion manager to sway him to a policy that was a trifle free. This morning he had had to order five hundred copies of Form No. 2—"We respectfully draw your attention to the acc't of — with \$— still due."

In three weeks perhaps he would have to send out Form No. 3 which said, "You have apparently disregarded our notices of —."

Yes, he had been too liberal. . . . To grant accounts to merchants with only G.3 rating—!

For a long time Mr. E. sat with serious brow, and still white high-lights on his shiny cheeks above his tight-drawn lips. But Mr. Crawford had endorsed this policy—had heartily advocated the radicalism. So Mr. E. sighed, and the load seemed to slip

from his shoulders. He had done nothing but what was asked of him.

He looked up to see Minden pausing before his desk in his breezy jaunt along the aisle. Minden walked like a conqueror, with brisk steps, his eyes glancing quickly from left to right.

"Been up to Crawford's office all morning," Minden announced. "Better go up to see him now, Eckersall,—he wants to talk to you." Briskly, he proceeded up the aisle.

Mr. E. methodically put away the sheaf of bills, and turned his steps abstractedly to the elevator.

He remembered, and turned back to give directions to Miss Jordan, so that the typists might proceed with the fill-in work on the multigraph forms.

Then, his eyes still thoughtfully vague, he made his way to the elevator, and was propelled upward.

II

IN the office, Mr. Crawford, wheeling about in his chair with unwonted briskness, greeted him.

"Well, Eckersall," he said, with an air of announcing a pleasant surprise, "How would you like to go into the Sales Department?"

A daze would not allow Mr. E. to reply. He sat trying to reduce these words, seemingly senseless, to an understandable meaning. He felt, rather than heard, Crawford's voice go on.

"Of course, it couldn't be considered a promotion. The salary would be the same. But you have been with us seven years, and we like to give a man a variation of experience."

Painfully, Mr. E. came to the issue. "You are dissatisfied with my work in the Credit Department?" he asked.

"N—no, not dissatisfied," Mr. Crawford smilingly deprecated. But the truth is, Eckersall, the Credit Department isn't doing what it should. Now of course, we don't blame you. Minden is the head of the department,—but still, in the five months that Minden has also taken up the duties of office manager, a great deal of the work

has fallen on you. And, well, Eckersall, I can't say we have had particularly good results."

Mr. E. sat quiet under the great blow of his life. He kept his eyes hard on his superior's face, and found no meaning in its graven lines. And if in that moment his own thin face became a trifle more grey, and the muscles of his lean jaw pulled a trifle more taut, it was because he had lost in that second of time all the self-esteem that had been his prop and bulwark, all that inner glow of satisfaction that had kept his life from becoming a gnarled and twisted hulk without a soul-substance to round it out.

Despairingly he struck out against the engulfing eddy of hopelessness.

"I—I have always followed our policy, Mr. Crawford."

"That's it—we may have outgrown our policy, or allowed it to stagnate. Now here I have a letter from a Canadian dealer, asking that we allow him a discount for sixty-day payment. Now our policy is sixty-day payments from all. But we have let it drift, until now anyone paying on time expects a cash discount."

Mr. E. grasped at the familiar details.

"We have always sent notices to overdue accounts."

"But they have been disregarded just like the bills," broke in his superior, with the ease of a god practising his thunders. "Perhaps we should be more conservative with credit—more radical in getting after new customers—new ideas, new ways—"

Mr. E. could have laughed at the ridiculousness of the situation. The words of Crawford, so meager—bland—inadequate. And they were about the great office downstairs, with its clicking machines, its pounding footsteps, its earnest-faced men and women straining to its rapid pace—

Perhaps for the first time in his life Mr. E. allowed his mind to wander from a business interview. But he found his eyes resting on the buff velvet rug at his feet, then passing to the

mahogany swivel-chair in which was the youthfully-portly form of Mr. Crawford.

He became hostilely conscious of the sumptuous glass-topped mahogany desk, of Mr. Crawford's manicured fingers resting on it.

His eyes passed to the man himself, the bland, smiling face with the cool eyes, the square, pink-shaven face, the thin glaze of parted hair, slightly greying at the temples. And a blaze of hatred woke in the orderly heart of Mr. E.—hatred for this man, his luxurious office, the calm sunlight that enriched his setting. It was so far removed from the hurried wooden-floored offices below. . . .

"I was saying to Minden," came the comfortable voice, "that we might give him a new assistant—with new, even rash methods, and let him fall back on Minden's experience. We were just interviewing a man to that purpose."

Again a stirring of bitterness awoke Mr. E.'s being, and his mouth twisted, sardonic signal of awakening freedom.

"So I am dead material," he thought.

"Now, of course, we thought of you, Eckersall. You can either have a few territories to manage, or we'll give you complete charge of the sales promotion department. That isn't big now—the mail order work is just begun—but you could do much with it. Now, of course, this isn't final. If there is any reason why you don't want to leave the department, if you have some new ideas you want to try out—why let us know."

Mr. E. felt grateful for the charitable lie that Crawford had appended. He knew that Crawford did not expect him to come forward with any saving ideas, but somehow it made the situation more tolerable.

"I'll think about it," he told Mr. Crawford.

But once he had left the office and was alone, he felt the hurt of the truth. He was a failure. Crawford considered him a failure.

Outside of the office door downstairs, he found it hard to enter. If before

he had left the office unconscious of the people in it, absorbed in his own thoughts, he felt now as if every stray glance could read his bewilderment, his misery. He quivered before the knowledge he sensed in the eyes that encountered him.

He reached at last the refuge of his desk and busied his hands among the papers there. He glued his eyes to these, but he could hardly suppress the desire to look about and know whose were the glances that burned him.

Soon he became aware in a shamed way that he was seeking cover in a pretence of business and he wondered whether in the days before, when he had hurried about, lost in the satisfaction of his work, they had known him for a failure and thought his absorption a sham.

He did not look up. Stubbornly, he read the papers on his desk, until his mind, like that of a child struggling with sleep, gave itself up to the anodyne of familiar problems.

Slowly his poise came back to him. These were the details he knew, from the small-town merchant, asking credit because of bad times, to the cheap subterfuge of the big concern that tried to return a consignment after half-a-year, because of a clause in their own bill-of-lading, forbidding back-orders.

He knew these people, their dodgings, their psychologies; he felt himself to be master of the intricacies that they built up. Kingly, he looked down upon their Ephesus, picked up the pawns out of their self-made labyrinths, and set them right again with infallible decision. This was his work! There was no longer any obstructing fog through which to struggle distressedly; he knew that while he felt this power in his work, he could not be a failure, and yet he knew that there was no use in crying out against their judgment—

He was filled with aching resentment. All about him were men who played with their work, who laughed and joked with each other at work, and forgot each other when they left, and yet theirs was the glory of success.

They had no responsibility, and no one sought to put more responsibility upon them.

Half an hour before noon, Minden swung past Mr. E. dressed for the street.

Mr. E. gritted his teeth and bent to his work. But he was thinking. . . .

III

At noon he ate his lunch at a cafeteria. But it was no longer a solitary lunch, as it had always been. With hot, eager eyes, he studied the people about him. Which were the failures, which the successes? What were the secrets of personality that advertised their individual talents to the bidders who pronounced judgment?

He found them shallow in the small swirl of their own groups, and he found them intense in their own individualities—self-absorbed; if they had an interest outside of themselves, they did not show it in this place where they fed. He was disappointed. The eyes of dreamers, of lovers of labor he had not seen. Proportionately, he became awake to his own worth, and his sense of injustice grew.

All afternoon, he worked with the rebellion hot in him. He became aware of the negligence that had dubbed him "Mr. E." He challenged every interruption with a hostile glance,—had they thought his time unimportant?

Soon he became aware that his hostility made no impression, and with a prudish qualm he feared that he had been merely snarling unpleasantly and making an undignified spectacle of himself. He retired into a shell of reserve. But he had an unpleasant sense that things were being noised about concerning him. And now he sensed a disrespect in the attitudes of those about him, just as he had that morning for the first time sensed their indifference.

For the first time he noticed the accumulation of work before him. He wondered hotly what Minden was doing. And through the afternoon he had an irritating sense that the piles of bills,

the letters, the file duplicates and credit memoranda did not decrease before his efforts.

At the close of the day, he swept them passionately into compartments, with none of his usual care as to how he should find them on the morrow. He was eager to be gone.

Somehow the day's irritation found its culmination in a small incident. He had often noticed the little clerk from the Look-Up Department in the State Street car which he took every night. Vaguely he had noticed her, but she had never had the courage to address him. Today, she threw back her head, and flashed him a smile in greeting.

The familiarity of the silly gesture with which she had greeted him incensed him. He scowled at her angrily, and was immediately stricken with compunction to see the little frightened look that sprang up on her face. He was ashamed. Had he lost all sense of proportion in his hatred? He found no comfort in the car under her occasional glances. Long before he reached his destination, he decided to get out and walk.

Outside, a two-days' accumulation of heavy snow, partly trodden down, made walking a slow and preoccupying process. Eckersall found it interesting to select the places where other footsteps had fallen and although this made his progress rather swaying, it was at any rate absorbing.

As he went on, all his rebellion slipped from him; he began to enjoy the clear night, the speckled purplish light of occasional street lamps, on the snow. He became alive to the light voices of men and women, greeting each other, or calling out in parting.

Behind him as he made his way down a narrow, slippery-shovelled walk, were the voices of two boys. Unconsciously, Eckersall followed their ringing conversation.

"Oh, she teaches us an awful lot. More'n some give in high school."

"How do you know? I guess you've never been in high school!"

"I know all about spheres, 'n cubes, 'n cones, 'n cylinders—"

"What's the Volume of a Cone?"

For a moment, there was silence, then Eckersall chuckled to hear the voice rise courageously,

"Aw, where do you get that? What you mean is the Area of a Cylinder—"

There followed a fraction formula that stifled the voice of the doubter. When they stumped past Eckersall on the corner, the voice of the smaller one was going again in the high-pitched realms of eulogy.

As he walked on, he smiled in admiration of the undaunted little one. When he reached his house, he was still smiling. In the living room, his sister, a smallish, rather faded woman ten years his senior, looked up in answer to his cheerful greeting.

"Been walking—" he said apologetically, to explain his good spirits.

"It's good for one," she conceded colorlessly, and rose to get his dinner.

It struck Eckersall for the first time that her spiritless shuffle stamped her as a much older woman than she really was. He wondered why she allowed the little wisps of blonde hair to fall purposelessly about her face, with the pale red-rimmed eyes that she needlessly ruined with constant sewing.

As he thought, he discovered what he feared was a likeness between himself and his sister. Was it possible that at the age of thirty-five he had already developed that meekness and aimlessness that so completely characterized her?

They ate dinner in silence. Eckersall was tired of the struggle that had consumed him all day, he wished he could recall the light-heartedness that he had felt as he walked home. He was grateful for that walk and the courage it had given him. Unobservant as she was in other things, his sister was always ready to discover signs of depression in him, and ferret out the cause. He felt that he wanted to keep his problem to himself.

IV

It was in the evening, when they were sitting in the living-room again, she with her sewing, and he with his evening paper, that he suddenly remembered the incident of the small boys, and laughed out loud as he heard the voice of the smaller one decisively reciting the formula he knew.

"What is it, Gregory?"

He was on the verge of telling her, then, suddenly, he knew he could not make her understand.

"Something in the paper," he said.

"Oh, you with your paper—" her voice came with a sigh.

He knew that the humour and appeal of the incident were particularly his own, because he knew that all his life he had lacked the boldness that gave black for white, and carried it off successfully. Appreciatively, yet somehow wistfully, he thought of the triumph of the littler boy. "The Area of a Cylinder—" he chuckled to himself reminiscently? "The little rascal—" and then again, "The Area of a Cylinder—"

Unconsciously, he reviewed his whole life, searching for a similar incident. Even in his boyhood, he had had none of that blustering self-confidence that had always been, and still was, his envy. The cares of life had fallen on him early. He had not sought to escape the burden of helping his parents. There was no boyish rebellion, no resignation to irksome work. Soberly, he had assumed the duties expected; with an unchildish seriousness he had accepted the responsibility of a "job." And so it had gone on. . . .

Soberly he had given what was asked of him. In a flash of revelation it came to him that that had been his fault. As Assistant Credit Manager, when he had been told to be more careful, he had refused extensions, subordinating his understanding of separate instances to the dictation from above. When the Sales Promotion manager, however, had swayed the higher powers to his viewpoint, Eckersall had let go the

reins. Those five hundred Form No. 2 notices now—that had bothered—

Unnoticed, his newspaper slipped to the floor.

"Gregory!" sounded his sister's sharp voice. "Whatever is wrong with you tonight?"

He was leaning forward on the table, his hands clenched, his jaw tight. What if it were possible to change now, to front nature with courage, to assert where he had acquiesced. He heard his sister.

"Some business ideas," he muttered, relapsing into his chair.

He began to understand his groping resentment, his rebellion of the morning, directionless as it had been. He had never had a free hand. Always he had given what was asked of him, painstakingly he had carried out every suggestion. But his own plans, his solutions to these problems that he understood, he never applied. And yet Crawford was blaming him for the working-out of his own policy. They were expecting him now to retire without having a chance. Was it possible to—? They had left him a loophole. Crawford had said he might stay in the Credit Department if he had any new ideas to try out.

What if he should not respond to this suggestion as he had always responded to suggestions. Give them what they don't expect! He had fire in him—and dreams.

"Mary!" he cried to his sister, and his laugh was like the laugh of a free man. "I've found it!"

"Found what, Gregory?"

"The formula—the Area of a Cylinder!"

The unexpected happened. It was a laugh—a giggle that trickled spontaneously from his sister's throat, young fire from out her withered lips. It leaped and scampered away on the trail of her words.

"Gregory! You do look so funny!"

Somehow the gleam in him, silver and gay like a sea-gull soaring, flopped dirty-white, and fell to earth, dead. He was disconcerted and empty.

Slowly, she began to explain. "You—talked like an inventor, Gregory, or something!"

Again, the giggle, low in her throat, involuntary, but audible.

She stifled it, went on—"Men are like children—funny—; get excited for

a minute—I mean. Clerks—feel like inventors—"

Her apologetic voice went out. . . .

Oh, well, it had been a hard day,—wearing. And there would be one tomorrow. And then—others. He guessed he would go to bed.



PIZZICATO

By George O'Neil

MY Margot, toward your casement hinge
The leaning moonflowers shake,
Trembling the filmy curtain fringe . . .
You do not wake.

The dew has drenched the white swan's wing
And he has come ashore . . .
A new moon hangs a golden string
Beyond your door . . .

A fountain whispers as it falls
Between the marble fingers
Of wan Narcissus near the walls
Where Echo lingers . . .

Oh, I will pull the moon's thin thread
And shake down stars in showers
For winds to heap upon your bed
Like golden flowers!



THERE are two kinds of women: those whom men like to confess their indiscretions to, and those who are the cause of the indiscretions.



A FOOL and her money are soon married.



SALESWOMAN 1318

By Helen Woljeska

IT is time to go home.

We are in the locker-room—dozens, hundreds of us, each opening a little wire cage, each struggling with coat and hat in narrow, crowded passage, under the hard flame of unshaded electric lights.

What faces! What personalities! What a jumble!

Bleached hair and painted cheeks, double chins and short bow legs, powdered wrinkles, emaciated arms, hollow eyes and work-crabbed fingers. . . .

Tawdry satins, coarse lace, ratty furs, crude perfumes. . . .

Cackling laughter and shamefaced giggles, shallow hopes and sordid ambitions, tenacious hatreds, dull complacency, and selfish fears. . . .

And in each nonentity the riddle of life, the secret of sex, the tragedy of doom. . . .



NOCTURNE

By Vincent Starrett

WE called him something loud and free
And tossed him through the door.
The night received him patiently,
As something of a bore—
He'd left that way before.

He left behind him in the bar
And scattered round the place,
A hat, a cuff, a chewed cigar,
Some pieces of his face—
And the disputed ace.

He didn't mind our coltish play;
He took it with a leer:
But it was pitiful the way
He whimpered for his ear—
We'd dropped it in the beer!



THE INTERLUDE

By John C. Cavendish

I

THEY separated without words, without a quarrel, with no final meanness of speech or gesture to linger regretfully in their memories. Neither of them was surprised at the smooth gentility of their parting; they expected a civilized deportment from each other. Langhorne had too profound a sense of the futility of everything to be surprised at the inevitable to be even regretful at the fully foreseen. And as for his wife, while she was surely not a woman influenced by any depth of philosophy, she always lived up to her rôle, which was one of complex artificiality.

Langhorne doubted that she had ever experienced a genuine emotion in her life, shed a heartfelt tear, smiled an authentic smile. He had come to regard her as a woman of intricate poses, a charming marionette with an extreme flexibility of attitude. She could, for example, enact excellently the pose of dignity, of tenderness, of graciousness, of silent scorn, even of pity—but she would never permit herself the part of a common woman, to bandy mean recrimination with him, to accuse him spitefully.

Just as he had expected, they agreed to part with the utmost amicability, with the understanding that they were tired of each other. And when she presented her lips for a final unfelt kiss, he had almost laughed aloud; it was so precisely the gesture she found in keeping with the moment! Now he was relieved; now he was free.

He had taken quarters in a hotel, but the city annoyed him and he felt

the desire to be alone for a time, separated from all the faces with which he was familiar.

Oddly enough, his mind went back to a certain summer, many years before, when he was still a very young man and had spent six months with a friend in the mountains, living in an isolated little cabin, cooking his own meals, taking a deep pleasure in the solitude and the freedom of his environment. Recalling the adventure, other reminiscences connected with this period returned to him; he remembered himself, his attitude toward life, his hopes, his ideals, his dreams.

He smiled: his hopes, his dreams—they were so far behind him that they had not even the substance of phantoms, they were more vague than ghosts, and he felt sceptical and amused at their one-time existence. But the idea of going away again to just such a place appealed to him strongly.

He made up his mind he would find a little house somewhere and try the experiment of being alone.

For a time he was puzzled about the location. Then he recalled a friend who owned a thousand or more useless acres in the mountain region of Pennsylvania—the fellow used to shoot small game there occasionally.

He looked up this chap and told him what he wanted.

"Your idea is to be absolutely alone?" he was asked.

"Yes; I'm not going to take a soul with me."

"What's the matter—nerves? Too much business?"

"No indeed. I'm a devil of a sight sounder than you are."

"Are you crazy then?"

"Perhaps. Sanity is only a convention. You follow certain lines of action, according to your station in life, and you're sane. There's a shack on the place, isn't there? Well then, tell me how to get there and I'll drive up with the back of my car full of provisions and camp till I get tired. Is that all right?"

His friend agreed, of course—Langhorne laughed when he parted from him. His vagary would furnish the topic for a great amount of futile speculation; these men assumed even less interesting and significant poses than his wife. He was glad he was going away. Perhaps he would be back in a week. Now that the affair was settled, he was not at all sure of himself.

It was still early in the spring and he anticipated some more cold weather. He provided himself with a couple of sweaters, leather boots, some thick gloves and an assortment of appropriate clothes.

He set out from the city at daylight one morning with the back of his car piled up with boxes and even the space beside him crowded with odds and ends. He was soon out in the country and, driving leisurely, he observed men in the fields beginning the spring plowing. Their occupation interested him; it seemed pleasantly real. If it had not been for his disinclination to get dirty, or to work hard physically, he believed he would rather like this sort of thing for a while himself.

At noon he stopped in a small town and had lunch. Late in the afternoon, as it showed signs of an early dusk, he decided to stop at the next road-house and put up for the night. He was still half a day's drive from his destination.

He had been out only a short time the following morning when the aspect of the country took on a marked change. The night before he had found himself in the foothills of the mountains; now the ascents became steep; the roads of hard-packed shale stretched up in long inclines; the woods

became more frequent and the little villages more widely separated.

The sky-line was now picturesque; blue, misted and sombre, with the distant ranges of the mountains like waves of heavy chromatic smoke, transfixed in their motionless undulations, and settled, like a sinister and suggestive pall, over the silent land. Nearer, the abrupt hills rose up like inaccessible sentinels of a more distant and impressive host, often bare, save for occasional pines, that topped them in a mournful and dignified isolation.

In these early morning hours the earth seemed wrapped in a primeval brooding, profoundly significant, profoundly inscrutable. Langhorne was pleased; he drove his car more rapidly, anxious to come to the end of his journey.

The last hour's driving was difficult. Some of the ascents were so steep that the water in his radiator boiled furiously and he had to stop at the top of the hills and let the engine cool. Toward noon he frequently consulted an improvised map, given him by his friend.

So far as he could tell, he was not more than an hour distant from the place he sought. He was fully in the mountains now; there were stretches of bare land, covered with a short growth of scrub oak that grew thickly and abundantly over the whole acres. Again, he passed silent miles of pine woods, very dark, curiously quiet, exhaling a suggestive fragrance. Now and then there was a house and cleared land, a forlorn worker trying to plow up a farm whose soil seemed an interminable perversity of rocks, large and small, with scarcely a handful of earth. Langhorne wondered at the dumb optimism of these people.

At last he located the approach to his own shack and verified it by questioning two lumbermen who were resting their horses at the bottom of a hill, a dozen pine logs piled on the trucks. They were seated on the top of a half of a lumber wagon, and as he talked to them they eyed him with a frank

curiosity. He went on another half mile and found the lane that led back to the house.

It was scarcely big enough for the passage of his car. The pines and hemlocks grew up on either side, shadowing the lane so that the road almost suggested a half-opened tunnel. It widened suddenly into a cleared space and he saw the frame house set up a few feet on an uneven terrace. A rabbit sat on the doorstep regarding him mildly, and it disappeared into the grass in long bounds as he alighted from his car. He could hear it in the brush for quite a time; the single sound of its flight accentuated the surrounding silence. In a few minutes he was inside the house.

He found several beds, a stove, a wood-pile in back, a fireplace and logs cut to burn, several easy chairs, a big table in what he determined to make his living room and three or four coal-oil lamps. He was entirely satisfied. He spent the remainder of the afternoon carrying his provisions from the car into the kitchen.

He went to bed very tired, but just before he fell into sleep he experienced a sudden wonder about his wife; what pose was she assuming now? No doubt the one of being gracious to some of the men she knew.

He smiled, and passed into unconsciousness with the smile on his lips.

II

AFTER a day or two, when he had settled himself, he made some tentative explorations in the vicinity of the house.

The lane that led in from the road, crooked and narrow at best, stopped abruptly at the frame building which he occupied and beyond the clearing it had its continuation in a path covered with pine needles that dipped down a quarter of a mile into the valley, where a spring of very cold water came up among a series of broad, flat rocks. He discovered the spring on the first day of his exploration and thereafter

he went down to it every morning to bring back his drinking water for the day.

Approaching the spring early one morning, the third or fourth day after his arrival, he heard voices in conversation. Evidently a man and a woman were at the spring, and before he made the turn of the path that revealed them, he experienced some surprise at their presence.

Now they came into his view; the man was kneeling on the rocks, dipping up the water in a shallow pail which he emptied into one of a pair of large buckets at his side. A girl was standing over him, talking. They did not notice Langhorne until he was almost upon them; his tread was silent in the needle-padded path.

The girl observed him first. She made an exclamation to her companion. He raised his head, still kneeling, and the two stared fixedly at Langhorne.

"Good morning," he said.

For a moment neither of them replied. Then the girl spoke.

"Who are you?" she asked.

She did not smile at him; her tone was surly; her voice was harsh. She seemed to resent his appearance; she looked at him as if he were trespassing on forbidden ground.

"I'm living in the house up above," he said.

She stared a moment more.

"Oh . . ." she muttered, finally.

She dropped her eyes; her expression was sullen, almost angry.

Langhorne observed her with curiosity. Her appearance was unkempt and in a measure suggested wildness, like that of a half-tamed animal. The tawny strands of her hair were drawn tight against her head, swept down across her ears and up into a large knot at the back. Her eyes were large, light blue, and cold. Her lips were full, and, it seemed, habitually sullen. She stood with her feet wide apart, in a pose of exceptional vitality.

Now her companion stood up and faced Langhorne. On his feet, he

looked enormous; he towered above the girl like a giant. On his huge frame, his small, youthful face and his small head seemed placed there by a mistake in creation, a neglectful inadequacy. He spoke in a hesitating, diffident voice, and smiled naively, ingratiatingly.

"This is your spring, I guess," he said. "We come down here once in a while to get some decent water. You don't mind that, do you? The creek is so blamed muddy this time of year."

"No, I don't mind at all," answered Langhorne.

The fellow stooped down and began to bail more water out of the spring. Then the girl lifted her eyes and looked at Langhorne, staring without flinching, as if he were a phenomenon.

"How long have you been here?" she asked.

Her question was put with a naïve directness, and with a flavour of belligerency that he afterward came to associate with all her speech.

"Nearly a week now," he answered.

"You don't belong here. Why did you come?"

He smiled at her, lifting his eyebrows a little, hesitating before he spoke again.

"Let me ask you some questions," he said. "That's fair, isn't it?"

"What do you want to know?"

"Well, who are you?"

"My name is Alice." She pointed at the kneeling giant. "Do you want to know who he is?"

Langhorne nodded.

"He works for my father on his farm. If you walk through these woods for half a mile you'll come to it. His name is Bredin. He wants to marry me!"

The girl began to laugh, almost mirthlessly. Langhorne saw the youthful Gargantua put out one hand in a hesitating, restraining gesture, which the girl ignored. His downward-cast face reddened violently. He said nothing.

"He hasn't got nerve enough for me," the girl went on, her smile disappearing, an expression of profound

scorn touching her features like the dropping upon them of a sinister mask.

"He's afraid of my old man," she added.

She looked down at the water buckets.

"Come on," she said, addressing the boy. "That's all we can carry."

The big fellow stood up, obedient and docile. He gathered up the pails and started off through the path. The girl followed him. She did not look back; she ignored Langhorne as if he had vanished from her thoughts, from her sight, from all necessity of taking leave of him.

He watched the curious pair until they disappeared in the woods. Then he filled his own pail.

The boy with the inadequate head did not interest him; he was thinking of the girl. She came to him with an unusual freshness, with the manner of something utterly new. All her speech, all her movements, her smallest gesture—the turn of her head, the shape of her lips in talking, the play of her figure under her cotton dress as she walked away—were essentially primitive and convincing. She had the genuineness of primeval simplicity. He could imagine for her all the elemental emotions exhibited with fervour and intensity. She was capable of savage hate, of mad love, of brutal scorn, of merciless animosities.

He turned away from the spring, thoughtfully, wondering. He hoped that he would soon see her again.

III

He came upon her about a week later, under startling circumstances.

He was walking through the woods, and he saw her sitting on a fallen log, panting like a spent animal, scowling and grimacing with the utmost ferocity at the tall trees that surrounded and were the silent and unconcerned recipients of her obvious rage.

Her brownish-yellow hair was loosened and fell about her face and shoulders in an astonishing profusion, in al-

most smothering masses. One of her cheeks was bright red, as if it had been painted with some livid dye. When she heard his footsteps she looked up suddenly, stared at him a second as if without recognition and then seemed to draw in a relieved breath. Evidently she had feared someone else.

"What do you want?" she exclaimed.

Langhorne approached her slowly. She did not rise from the log, but tilting her face, fastened her malignant eyes upon him.

Something in her stare thrilled him, touching his heart to a vague fear, to a profound interest, to the consciousness of a vital and unaccustomed experience.

For a few seconds he looked at her without speaking.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked, finally.

She glared at him with a primitive and deep ferocity, so manifestly genuine, that for a moment he had the confused sense of being himself the author of some fundamental hurt to her, some act of violence and force that aroused all her abundant hatred, all her profuse rage. She clenched the fingers of her strong hands brutally against her thighs.

"My old man is a devil!" she cried. "The old fool gets drunk, and then the Lord Almighty couldn't do anything with him. Sometime when he tries to beat me up, I'm going to kill him; don't think I haven't got the nerve; I'll knock him on the head with whatever I get my hands on!"

For a second she ceased speaking; she dropped her eyes and stared with sombre resolution at the silent earth.

"He was out all night," she went on. "He came in this morning and pulled me out of a chair by the hair. He knocked me down and tried to kick me. I rolled out of his reach and ran away from the house. He chased me over the fields."

She paused again, and pushed back the burdening mass of long hair from her face.

"The last I saw of my old man," she

said, "he was lying in the mud of the cornfield, where he fell. Oh, I'll kill him sooner or later, you believe me!"

Her voice was hoarse, harsh, muttering; he did believe her. He believed her absolutely, with an entire faith in her revengeful and passionate purpose.

His conviction was so complete that her words impressed him profoundly; she had for him the aspect of an enraged animal; she crouched on the log like a tiger, ready at any instant with the stroke of a savage paw.

Again he felt her genuineness, her primitive sincerity. By some obscure impulse he was made to think of his wife, and the contrast of her gestures, her poses, her inconsequent postures, set off luminously the emotional directness of the girl before him.

The situation pleased him. He was aware, suddenly, that it was pleasant to come upon this sort of adventure in his life, to know that there were in the world these simple people, full of elemental rages, real hate, real brutality, real passion.

He thought of the savage fellow who must be her father—her "old man." He wanted to meet this savage, talk with him; he knew he would be as stimulating as his daughter. These people seemed in entire consonance with the brooding and sinister nature among which they had their being.

He stepped close to the girl and touched her shoulder.

"Your cheek is inflamed," he said. "He must have hit you there. If you want to walk up to the house with me, I'll give you something to wash it in that will take down the swelling."

For a little while she was motionless, silent, unregardful, staring at the earth as if she had not heard him. Then she stood up swiftly.

"All right," she said.

She quickly passed her hand under his arm.

"Your cheek is inflamed," he said. "I believe I like you. . . ."

Her manner underwent a rapid and entire change. She appeared to forget

her hurts, the savage flight from the old man, the vengeful thoughts that had occupied all her consciousness a few seconds before. She smiled; she looked at Langhorne's face; she walked along in full strides at his side.

"You remember that fellow I was with the other morning?" she asked. "I love to make him feel bad! Do you know, he's afraid of my old man! I wasn't lying to you. I don't believe I'll marry him.

"You promised?"

"I tell you what I'm going to do," she said. "I'm going to tell Bredin that he's got to show me he's no coward. The next time my old man comes after me, he's got to beat him up. If he don't, I'm through with him. That's what I'm going to say to him the next time I see him—this afternoon, I guess."

Langhorne glanced at her determined face, conscious then of a certain fact.

In this one instance she was pursuing not a genuine emotion but an attitude. She was not in love and the young fellow whom she conditionally proposed to marry stirred none of her ardent emotions, aroused none of her obvious capacity for desire.

She contemplated marriage as a convention—the only inclination toward a convention that he had discovered in her. To be married was evidently one of the circumstances that she believed necessary in her life.

Langhorne smiled slightly. This was ironic. He almost wished that he himself were possessed of youth, illusions and emotions that he might make love to her, start a flame in her, and find within himself a corresponding fire.

IV

ONE evening, a few days later, returning from a long walk, Langhorne approached the clearing of his house and was surprised to find the girl sitting on the small porch, quite evidently waiting for him. He hurried toward her, and mounted the steps, smiling.

She returned his smile with a more

frank expression of pleasure than he had ever seen before on her habitually sullen face.

"Hello," she said.

"I'm glad to see you here," he told her. "Is there anything special I can do for you?"

"Oh, no. I thought I'd like to talk a bit with you."

He sat down on the steps, leaning against one of the posts, turning his face up to hers.

"Have you had any more trouble these last few days?" he asked.

"The old man's been sober," she replied.

"He's all right when he's sober?"

"Well—I guess he's afraid of me when he's sober. He's never all right. I'm tired of all this! I want to get out of it!"

She seemed languid, weary, less vital than he had remembered her. She sat talking with her hands in her lap, her head inclined against the chair-back, using fewer of the abrupt gestures with which she ordinarily illustrated her speech. He found her none the less interesting because she was capable of a more subdued mood. She had still the appeal of freshness, the appeal of something new, of something fundamentally real.

He found that she made him a little uneasy; he could not approach her with the suavity to which he was accustomed, he could not predict just what she would do next.

She startled him when finally she stood up abruptly and ran down the steps without a word of preparation. All the flame of her vitality had returned. She was frowning.

"Must go!" she exclaimed. "I'll be over again some time soon. I like to talk to you. You're different."

She strode off down the path into the woods, with the energetic stride of a boy; he smiled as he watched her go.

The incongruity of her interest in him was amusing. Unquestionably she had never known a man of his sort; he was like one of another species, a different animal, something utterly new in the

shape of a human being. But this was a mutual attitude, for she was quite as novel to him.

A sense of the curious chances of life came to his thoughts. No one could have predicted his meeting with this girl and now that they knew each other, through an accident of acquaintance entirely outside their purpose or intent, no one could foresee what events might befall them.

As if looking at himself, the girl, the enormous boy whom she intended to marry, the father whom he had never met, from some aloof and detached ground of observation, he felt they were all the unconsulted reagents in an obscure chemistry of the fates, charged with potentialities, capable of unfathomed reactions.

He recalled the words of an old Spanish physician whom he had known some years before. They had been drinking whiskey and soda together at Langhorne's club, surrounded with everything to make them at ease, detached for their whole lives, it appeared then, from any arduous concern over the more simple necessities of life. And commenting on this, the charming old man had said:

"Well, my friend, it's all smooth for us at present! But who knows anything about this time in the next year? Nothing will surprise me; perhaps I will be sitting in a dirty white apron, selling sausages in the market-place at Turino!"

The girl did as she had said. Two or three times every week she came to see Langhorne, always at about the same time.

She appeared in the evening, while it was still twilight, sat with him on the porch and talked continuously until she made her sudden departures. Once or twice she was accompanied by Bredin, who came with her as a silent and uncouth shadow, lounged on the steps with the air of being forever ill at ease, and followed at her heels when she strode off into the woods like a docile and enormous bear.

Her conversation was frequently

startling in its display of savagery; life presented itself to her as an adventure in fundamental intensities, a complex of passionate possibilities. She talked of hate and revenge; of shocking brutalities; of stark physical encounters. She had seen men killed by the pitilessness of inanimate nature and once she had witnessed a man clubbed to death in a brawl. The whole aspect of life took on for her the fantastic and almost unbelievable colour of lurid melodrama.

Meanwhile, Langhorne met her father. He came one evening, "just to get acquainted," he said, and talked for an hour or more with his hands in his pockets, pulling periodically on a blackened pipe. He bore a very great resemblance to his daughter—it was impossible to imagine what the dead mother may have been like. He had the same thick, tawny hair, the same sullenness of expression, but his movements lacked her abruptness without sacrificing any of the appearance of vitality that Langhorne had first observed in the daughter. The man was quite sober when he made this visit.

He had known these people perhaps a month when a startling adventure was precipitated that came to him nevertheless without any profound surprise, so surely had he felt it within their possibilities.

He was awakened early one morning, not long after midnight, by an insistent pounding noise. He sat up in bed, sleepy and confused, listening.

The noise, that seemed to vibrate through the wooden building like the repeated blows of some heavy instrument, was at first diffuse; he could not localize it. Then, more fully awake, he was aware that someone was pounding at the door below.

He threw back the blanket and jumped out of bed. He ran out in the hall and downstairs.

The knocking was continuous, urgent and very loud. He pushed back the bolt of the door and opened it.

Two figures were outside and he recognized them at once. The girl, with a raised fist—it must have been she who

had aroused him—was standing with her foot on the sill. Close behind her, like a dusk shadow of grotesque proportions, amorphous and huge in the darkness, was Bredin. He stood in a curiously inert attitude; his hands were hanging at his sides in a limp paralysis; his legs seemed to sag, partially illuminated by the insufficient glow of an oil lantern he held dangling in the fingers of one immense hand.

When the door was opened the girl, peering at Langhorne for a moment, turned suddenly, and, getting behind the apparently inanimate Bredin, pushed him in short vicious shoves over the threshold and into the house.

She slammed the door shut after her, and bolted it. Bredin dropped into a chair, seeming to swallow his support with the amplitude of his bulk, and sat without saying a word, his face covered with his hands, his elbows resting on his knees. Langhorne set the lamp near him on the table and now he could see that the boy was shivering with convulsive violence.

"You're alone?" the girl asked.

Her voice was tense, nervous, more harsh than ordinarily.

"Yes," said Langhorne.

"Look at that fool!" she said, pointing at Bredin with bitter contempt. "Hasn't he got a lot of nerve?"

"What's the matter? What has happened?"

"Wouldn't you think a big lump of flesh like that would have nerve enough in it to see him through?" she went on. "What did he wake up for? I could have done the thing myself!"

The boy said nothing. He sat in the same attitude and the chair shook with the convulsive movements of his body.

"What's he afraid of?" she continued, speaking louder now. "He must think there's a rope around his neck already. What does he expect to become of him—like that? Does he think he's got nerve enough left to do anything to help himself?"

She sat down suddenly, exhaling an exclamation of extreme venom and contempt.

Langhorne saw now that she was only half dressed; her shoes were untied; she seemed to have no stockings; her hair fell over her shoulders like unwound strands of heavy rope. He stood near her silent, waiting for her story.

She told it in exclamations, in fragments, punctuating it with abuse of her silent, shivering companion. She contorted her face with savage grimaces; she breathed in sharp gasps.

Her old man, she said, had come home after midnight, howling drunk. She was awakened by his curses at the door and she lay in bed, staring up into the darkness, waiting. He came in; he kicked a chair out of his way, and mounted the stairs in a stumbling ascent. He stopped in the hall near her room and swore for five or ten minutes—he cursed everything, the woods, the land, the house, Bredin, herself and finally, as was customary, his inebriate animosity concentrated itself upon her.

She lay very quiet, waiting. Then she heard him coming closer to her room; he opened the door. He was carrying a lantern in his hands. He dropped the lantern on the floor and made a rush at her bed. She rose up suddenly and flung the sheet over him; this gave her a second in which to elude him. Of course he was now enraged to madness; for a few moments he struggled with the entangling sheet and then charged her like a bull. She ran out into the hall and found the boy emerging from his room at the end of the corridor.

Bredin yelled at the old man to stop. His voice had a curious effect. She said her father paused abruptly, his head lowered, his matted hair falling forward into his eyes. He lifted his face and stared at the interposing figure of the excited boy.

Then he began to laugh and for a moment he chattered there in the hall like a mad ape. His cachinnation ceased with the abruptness with which it had begun; he clenched both his fists and rushed at Bredin. The two came together with the dull impact of hard

bodies. For some seconds they swayed in the hall in indistinct, furious gyrations; then they crashed to the floor together and the house resounded with the noise of their falling. The girl, panting, disheveled, stood over them, watching the combat with wide eyes, with a keen delight.

For a time she could see nothing but the kicking of their legs, their flying arms, their twisting figures and from the interlocked pair came the cursing of her father. Then the two became more quiet; the cursing ceased; she could hear the hard breathing of only one of them.

She ran back to her room and got the lantern. She leaned over the two men. Bredin was on top and his two immense hands held her father's throat in an implacable, ineluctible grasp.

She pulled at his hands and he finally loosened his hold; he stood up and staggered against the wall. She bent over the old man; it was with a feeling of inevitability, without remorse, without any especial joy, that she saw him quite dead.

At this moment Bredin seemed for the first time to comprehend his act. He was at once the victim of an unnerving terror; his fright was pitiful.

But for this manifestation the girl had no pity and the admiration for him that had begun to vibrate in her consciousness changed instantly to contempt.

Nevertheless, seeing him helpless, she conceived it her duty to save him. He would be incapable of brazening out an inquiry. Nothing was left to him but the acknowledgment of guilt in flight. She forced him to put on his clothes and she had brought him with her to Langhorne.

"What are we going to do with him?" she asked.

From the beginning, the affair had held no surprise for Langhorne. He looked at the prostrated boy and understood his condition fully. The youth had been aroused to a primitive fury at the sight of danger to the girl he loved,

but he had held no premeditated notion of murder. The knowledge of his act came as an overwhelming blow.

Watching him, the older man experienced an emotion of profound pity. Deeply interested, he determined to play out this rôle that had come to him unasked. He sat in silence for several minutes.

Finally he stood up, addressing the girl.

"Keep him here," he said, "for a while. I'll get dressed and then bring out my car from the shed. I'll drive him down to the city and if I make good time we'll be well on our way before daybreak. I'll get him into a room there and have him keep under cover for a while. A searching originating in a place like this can't reach very far—no one will ever find him. Afterward I'll come back and take you down to him."

She said nothing, but as he passed out of the room he saw her looking at him with a smile, a smile for his resourcefulness, a smile for her admiration.

This somehow thrilled him, and the fact that she could thrill him gave him an instant surprise.

V

LANGHORNE executed his plan without any difficulty. For the first part of the trip he kept the boy half prone in the back of the car, covered over with a pile of blankets. When they were out of the mountains he permitted him to sit up.

The youth had nothing to say. He no longer shivered as he had some hours before, but he seemed dead and half comatose, incapable of independent action. They reached the city late the night following their escape. Langhorne had driven continuously and he was enormously weary. Nevertheless, he persisted until he found a cheap lodging-house for the boy and saw him safe in his room. Then he went to his apartment and fell to sleep instant-

ly; he did not awaken until the next afternoon.

He stayed in the city a day before making the return trip. Going back now, the first sight of the mountain landscape impressed him deeply; the sinister ridges in the purple distance seemed to brood over inscrutable secrets. He reached his house in the afternoon at much the same time as he had arrived in the first instance. He did not see the girl until a day later.

She told him all that had happened in his absence. Of course Bredin, who had disappeared, was held guilty and the sheriff had searching parties hunting the woods for him. They were confident that he would soon be discovered. When questioned she had denied any witnessing of the murder; she claimed that a noise had awakened her in the night, but on listening and hearing no further sounds she had gone to sleep. In the morning she said she had discovered her father lying in the hall. Their farm hand, Bredin, was gone.

He talked to the girl less than an hour this time. They agreed not to see each other for several weeks, in order to prevent any inquiries directing themselves toward Langhorne.

When he left her he experienced an hour or two of sincere surprise. It came to him then how curiously and spontaneously he had become involved in this affair, and yet how much outside its inner heart he was after all. He shared none of the elemental emotions of these people, not the hate and malice of the girl, nor the impulse to kill and the reaction of abject fear that had come to the boy in the city, nor the brutal rage of her murdered father. He was differentiated from them as completely as the people of another star.

Several weeks passed by and the search for the unfortunate Bredin relaxed and dwindled. The death of an obscure farmer made only a restricted and local stir. Since his daughter was now alone she stated her intention of leaving the farm and going down to the city; she spoke vaguely of her rela-

tives. The day was fixed when Langhorne was to take her with him in his car.

She came to him early one morning, wearing strangely ill-fitting clothes and carrying a small handbag. She seemed subdued and more than ordinarily sullen. She had very little to say; they drove away in silence.

As Langhorne steered the car into the tortuous lane and the shadows of the tall trees fell over it in a sinister and implacable caress, he turned and looked back at the house. Already it had begun to bore him; he knew he would not return. The series of episodes that had made so long a stay possible was now entering its concluding stage.

He glanced at the girl sitting by his side. Her face was fixed in front, her lips were compressed and the changing shadows of the close branches that brushed the sides of the car came and went on her face with the singular effect of penumbra thrown from the spread wings of dark, unseen birds. She was still silent.

They drove steadily until it was noon and stopped along the edge of the woods to eat the lunch they had brought with them. Both got out of the car and walked about a little to ease their cramped muscles. Then they sat down at the edge of the road and unpacked their lunch. They ate in silence.

As they were about to rise, the girl put out her hand quickly and clasped his in a tense, hard grip.

"Why are you taking me to him?" she asked. "That isn't my plan!"

He looked at her, surprised.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked.

She held his hand, she looked at his face intently, her eyes narrowed a little. She seemed to be speculating, hesitating over a decision.

And then she seized his head between her hands and with a swift, resistless movement drew his face against her own.

She found his lips and kissed him; she gave him a strange thrill of fear. She startled him; her kisses were pas-

sionate, intense, clinging. These were not, he knew, the kisses of a formula, the kisses given lightly, the kisses exchanged in the easy game of love he had played so often, but were the physical expression of an urgent and genuine emotion, to which he was without the power of response. He felt immensely oppressed, a little giddy, and he drew in a rapid breath of relief when she dropped her imprisoning hands and spoke to him.

"You're not going to take me to him," she said. "I'm going to be with you!"

She made no further attempt to embrace him.

They got into the car again and continued their journey. But now, when he stole glances at her, he saw a profound assurance in her face, a certainty of her purpose, a confidence in the outcome of her plans. During the remainder of the trip she was as silent as before, but now her silence was more meaningful, as if she were waiting, were infinitely expectant, were pausing for the proper moment of avowal and assurance by speech and action.

He began to pity her, and in a small degree to pity himself. She had no means to measure his complete separation from her, the aloofness of an utterly different life. And he, too, had a regrettable lack; whatever capacity for fire had been his youthful endowment, the fuel of the flame had gone unseen, like an escaping vapour into the spent days of his other years.

And mixed with these emotions came his never-failing appreciation of persistent irony: how ironic it was that he

should have been the chosen agent to bring her her futile hopes, her unavailing visions, her purposeless dreams!

He began to smile; his aplomb returned; he was in full possession of himself.

They entered the city the next morning. He drove her straight to the room where he knew the boy was waiting. She did not question him; her faith seemed boundless. He stopped before the house and helped her to alight.

They went in together and he led the way upstairs. He paused outside a room on the second floor. He opened the door and with a gentle push thrust her over the threshold into the room. He heard a clumsy movement of someone inside rising from a chair. He did not wait to observe the expression of joy that would come to the face of the boy, nor her own deep dismay.

He closed the door suddenly and ran down the stairs. He ran until he was out of the house and in his car. He drove away in a half-flight with the sound of the eager roar of the engine accompanying him like a symbol of escape.

He had decided to go back and see his wife. He knew she would receive him quietly, even graciously. He saw very clearly, with entire assurance, the smile she would give him, and heard the words she would say. This was comforting—to be assured, to understand. He left behind him, in a room presided over by brick walls whose gloom counterfeited the sinister brooding of their own moods, these two of a more elemental age, who knew the sincerities of hate, of despair, of passion, of hope. . . .



A WOMAN thinks of her husband in terms of other men, but a man thinks of other women in terms of his wife.



WILD OATS

By Joseph Bibb, Jr.

THERE was both a simplicity and a lordliness about retiring that gave him a more than double delight. How often had he looked forward longingly to the day. His heart had been in his work, true; yet a man of any breadth must admit that there are other things in life, other beauties, than leather and findings. And now retirement was possible. He had made his little nest-egg. And the business was so smoothly running a machine that the quest of surprises was ended. One is entitled to leisure in the declining years.

Not that he felt declining. Still, one does not live forever. There must be ample time for the well-earned quiet. Besides, retirement sometime is incum-

bent on a man of culture. There were so many who worked on to the end for the lack of the saving grace, the philosophy, the taste, as it were.

He at least was not dead to the fine things of leisure. He would retire: he decided upon it forthwith and benediction lighted his mind at the thought of the easeful future. There was so much for him now, so much that he had always wanted, as a man of taste. And perhaps he no longer would be alone. A sharer at the fireside—who could tell? He would retire at once: upon his birthday. That came next week. The day would mark a rounded period of active life. It should be arranged at once. His birthday . . . his ninety-first birthday.



SONG

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

I HAVE loved the rainbows
And the wild gusts of rain,
And white ships in the dark storms,
And leopard-women twain.

I have loved the red dawns
And waters deep and blue,
And roads that burned with moonlight—
How can I love you?



MIRAGE

By E. Michaelis

THEY had been a dream, these last two hours, a dream from which perchance she should expect no realization. And yet she hoped, as one may hope when one is young and still confident that the power for good ultimately rules all things. She hoped joyously and madly because she knew that never again could she endure the innumerable days, out on the desert "alone," she found herself saying, with her sister and the children.

Her head lay back upon the cushion, the dusky eyes half closed, the lips drawn into a tight line. It was not a pretty face, at times it might have been ugly, glorified it would have been beautiful; but faces do not become glorified out on the Mojave desert where the sand-storms wail and the heat wilts.

It all seemed so strange to her now. Why, why had she not? But the question remained unfinished, her lips trembled, and the whole episode rushed back upon her mind with an intensity that she had not felt when it actually occurred.

It had lasted but a short time and it had not been a grand passion. If only she had expected no more. If only she could have realized at twenty that the "grand passion" is the exception that we read of in the novel, and that for you and me and all of us who are not very rich, nor very good, nor very beautiful, the companionship of two loyal souls is the usual ideal to await successfully.

He had been handsome and she had liked him; perhaps if she had not just then read "Guinevere" she would have thought she loved him, but so soon after that it all seemed too commonplace.

Now after the three months they had

decided to wait before they should meet again, if they were ever to meet, she knew that her only possible happiness in life was to follow him for better or for worse to the ends of the earth. Again and again she thrilled with joy, that instead of saying "no" forever she had said that they would meet again at the end of three months in Needles, if he should feel as he had felt three months before and if she should love him.

It was a seven-hour ride she had to make to the place of their tryst, and the miles dragged on interminably. The small desert hills burned black by the sun seemed to radiate heat; the greasewood blinded the eyes with its headache grayness; no stir of life betrayed that the desert was a part of God's busy world. But in the infinite distances she could discern the vague outline of the opalescent mountains and it seemed to her that beyond them cool meadows shaded by big, shaggy trees must stretch forever.

As again she became vaguely conscious of life around her, she became for the first time specifically aware of the young man across the aisle who was eyeing her in the very casual manner of the youth who expects to have the overwhelming pleasure of opening a window, with a disagreeable lock, for a lonesome young lady, or possibly of picking up a handkerchief. But being unlearned in the wiles of railway flirtation she leaned over and asked him how long it would be before they would reach Needles.

Being a very obliging young man and a very bored one, he not only gave the desired information, but slid over be-

side her and began to tell her of Needles, which she had not seen. It was a small town he told her, and in that stage of would-be civilization in which the elite play bridge for silk stockings and read skeptical magazines. It was a pleasant place to be, however, he added, if one were not inclined to be bored, but—

Surprised to find her paying little attention, or at least not emitting the usual feminine gurgles of interest, he labelled her a bore and excusing himself as soon as possible resorted to the smoker for the remainder of the trip.

Once more she leaned back, her lips slightly parted, and this time a smile hovering near them.

"Needles," cried the conductor, and from the window she marked the conglomeration of engines, trees and smoke-stacks that greet one upon entering the town. Hastily and nervously she alighted.

"Tan sants, Twenty-five sants," droned the Mojave squaws with their strings of beads, but novel as it all would have seemed at any other time within the past five years, today she hastened from it into the little waiting-room, the place of tryst. It was a vile, cell-like place with benches around the walls on which were hung soiled advertising pictures of the Yosemite and Grand Canyon; and it was empty except for a Mexican woman and her brood. She hastened to the ticket office to learn that the train on which he would arrive was late and would not come for twenty

minutes. She sat a moment and then walked out into the open court between the Harvey House and the tracks. The afternoon sun had caused most pedestrians to desert except the trainmen and the Mojave squaws, who still held up their wares, droning, "Tan sants, twenty-five sants."

In the distance a train whistled. Three minutes later it came to a stop before the Harvey House.

She waited, with a sensation she had felt but once before. It had been six years before when the doctor had told her that her mother might live, but the doctor had not known.

As in a dream she watched the usual passengers alight—the laughing soldiers, the lady traveling for her health, the woman with the two marriageable daughters, the fat drummer, the three college boys, but the tall familiar figure she saw only in her mind's eye.

The train soon became empty, the travelers swarming into the Harvey House. For a moment she thought she would fall, but, gaining control of herself, she stumbled through the vague darkness toward the waiting-room. For several moments she sat there unconscious of the Mexican baby playing to her, unconscious of the eyes of the ticket agent fixed curiously upon her, unconscious of all save her own dumb, blank, overwhelming misery. At length she walked to the ticket window and asked in a firm voice for a return ticket. Her train would leave in fifteen minutes.



THE saddest thing in marriage is not a husband who tries to escape, but a husband who believes that he is happy.



ALL love affairs terminate in unpleasantness. They either end too soon or they end too late.



LE SECRET DE LUCAS

By Hubert Fillay

DANS la grange, le pressoir avait été dressé et, chaque soir, après la cueillette des grappes, à la lueur des bougies, les hommes *habillaient* l'énorme machine.

C'est un labeur qui demande de l'attention mais dont on vient vite à bout lorsqu'on s'accorde bien. Une traverse après l'autre, l'édifice monte et prend tournure. Les raisins passent des *jales* aux broyeur, des broyeur au pressoir, qui écrasera leur chair et en exprimera le jus sucré.

Pan! Michel le tonnelier cogne en mesure sur les cercles, rythmant un air de pas redoublé que Bardou, l'ancien clairon, siffle à pleins poumons.

Enfin, le pressoir est *habillé*. Bardou l'examine, puis, satisfait, s'approche du levier, le pousse, le ramène. . . . Le jus des grappes commence à dégringoler dans le cuvier. . . .

— Repos! . . . crie le clairon. Et il saute à terre.

— Je fumerais bien une cigarette.

Son camarade Lucas lui passe du tabac.

— A quoi penses-tu? demande Bardou. Tu as une tête pas ordinaire. . . .

— Moi, à pas grand'chose de sérieux, comme qui dirait une histoire arrivée voilà plus de quinze ans, là-bas, dans le vignoble. Tout le monde en a été bouleversé pendant trois semaines. . . .

— Si tu te figures que je comprends un mot à tes boniments! fait l'ancien clairon.

— T'es trop jeune, Bardou! Mais Michel s'en souvient, lui. . . . Michel, tu te rappelles-t'y le Béju, celui qui avait le poil roux et une si vilaine dégaine? . . . Et Moriau, tu t'en souviens-t'y de Moriau? . . .

— Celui qui est mort à cette époque-ci de l'année?

— Juste. Eh bien je sais comment ça s'est fait, et personne ne s'en est jamais douté. . . . Mais je n'ai rien dit, les affaires des autres ne sont pas les miennes, n'est-ce pas, Michel?

* * *

Bardou donna quelques coups au levier, et le vin nouveau recommença à couler. . . . Alors Michel et l'ancien clairon écoutèrent.

— Vous savez ce qu'est la vendange pour les filles et les gars. Ceux qui hotent ne se privent point de pincer une gamine, de la *biner* quand elle ne s'y attend pas. Pan, ça y est, derrière l'oreille. La drozine fait du potin.

— Vous allez me laisser, grand imbécile! . . .

On dirait qu'elle va tout manger, mais c'est des giries; un quart d'heure après, elle rit comme une folle, et, si le gaillard n'est point déplaisant, peut-être se demande-t-elle quand il recommencera.

Chez le maître Fleury, où je travaillais alors, à La Brosserie, il y avait toujours une quinzaine de vendangeurs. Moi, j'étais garçon charretier, et j'étais sur le point de me marier. C'est vous dire que j'étais sérieux. Mais Moriau, qui était malin comme un diable, courait toutes les filles, les taquinait, les embrassait, les remuait comme des toupies. . . . Il n'était pas possible de le retenir. D'un bout de la vigne à l'autre, on riait du matin au soir. . . .

Ça n'était pas comme le Béju. . . . Laid, maigre, la goule remplie de taches de rousseur, il avait des dents à vous donner la chair de poule, lorsqu'il venait manger à côté de vous. . . . Un vrai loup. . . . Avec cela, des yeux verts, méchants comme ceux d'un chat.

Personne ne voulait le voir. Il était surnois, menteur. Et, voyez comme c'est curieux, il n'y avait pas plus jaloux. . . .

Moriau surveillait la Titine, rapport qu'elle était un beau brin de fille, point difficile à débaucher de son travail. . . . Elle riait, elle riait, dès qu'elle se sentait embrassée! Et c'était fini; elle n'aurait pas remué un doigt pour se défendre. . . . Béju (le Rouquin, comme on disait) entra en rage rien qu'à la voir s'amuser avec Moriau. "Saligauds, glapissait-il, vous êtes des saligauds!" Et chacun criait après la Titine, n'aurait-ce été que pour exciter Béju davantage.

La vérité, c'est qu'il aimait Titine avec rage, avec toute la méchanceté qui lui emplissait la peau, et qu'elle le dédaignait malgré ses avances, ses supplications et ses promesses. . . .

— Ce que je veux, c'est une peau d'écureuil pour descente de lit. Va chez le boucher, dislui qu'il te dépiaute, mon ch'tit rougeaud. . . . Après ça, je t'aimerai pour la vie. . . .

Béju, pâle de fureur, grinçait des dents. Je pensais toujours: "Il finira par faire un mauvais coup. . . ."

Un soir, comme aujourd'hui, la vengeance tirait à sa fin.

Béju et ce pauvre Moriau devaient fouler les cuves de rouge à la nuit. Le maître Fleury leur avait recommandé de passer au cellier vers les six heures, après avoir dételé leurs chevaux. J'étais seul à la ferme; et, comme la besogne ne me pressait pas, je m'étais couché sur quelques bottes de paille, dans l'écurie.

Voilà que j'entends Béju et Moriau ouvrir la porte du cellier. Ils causaient ensemble; et je les comprenais comme si j'avais été avec eux, puisqu'un mur, seul, nous séparait et que les portes étaient grandes ouvertes.

Tout d'un coup, Béju dit à Moriau:

— Pourquoi que la Titine ne veut pas de moi. . . .? Si tu voulais, elle ne demanderait pas mieux. Quand il y en a pour un, il y en a bien pour deux.

Sans souci de la prière désolée qui montait vers lui, Moriau éclata de rire, et nargua:

— Tu n'as pas de toupet! . . . Tu ne

t'es don jamais vu, avec ta binette d'orang-dégou tant es tes cheveux queue de bœuf? Sûr que non, elle ne veut pas de toi, la Titine. Elle a rudement raison. . . . S'il n'y a que moi pour lui conseiller de t' faire les yeux doux!

— Qu'est-ce que ça te ferait, Moriau?

— Ça me ferait que je ne veux pas porter des cornes par la faute d'un affreux comme toi! . . . Tiens, je vais être gentil: je l'embrasserai pour toi, si ça te convient? . . . Ça va t'il? . . .

— Nom de Dieu! . . . hurla Béju.

Que se passa-t-il alors? . . . Ce fut le bruit d'une lutte. . . . Quelque chose comme une dégringolade, suivie d'un plongeon. . . . Moriau, soulevé de terre, devait être dans la cuve. . . .

Un bâton s'abattit sur du bois. . . .

Moriau cherchait à remonter à l'air, en s'accrochant aux rebords du tonneau, et Béju cognait sur les mains, jusqu'à ce que sa victime, lâché prise.

Je m'étais soulevé sur mon lit. J'étais déjà à la porte de l'écurie quand un grand râle passa. . . .

Aussitôt, la porte du cellier se ferma avec un claquement sec. . . . La clef tourna dans la serrure. Ils étaient deux derrière: l'assassin et la victime.

Que faire? Je réfléchis. . . . Dénoncer Béju, appeler au secours. Si Moriau était mort à quoi cela servirait-il? Je retournai me coucher, laissant Béju s'évader à pas de loup, puis revenir ensuite, flanqué du patron. . . .

— Malheur de sort, c'est-y possible. . . . Moriau qui est tombé dans la cuve! gémit le rougeaud en poussant des cris à fendre l'âme.

— Il est perdu. L'acide carbonique l'a asphyxié, déclara maître Fleury.

Je m'en vins sur ce coup de temps-là, et je ne dis ni oui, ni non. . . . Les affaires des autres ne sont pas les miennes, pas vrai, Michel? . . .

Michel hocha le front d'un air pensif. . . .

— T'aurais bien dû l'dire tout d'même, fit Bardou, suspendu à nouveau au levier du pressoir. . . .

Et le vin recommença de pleurer dans le cuvier, tandis que Michel, vérifiait un autre fût à grands coups de maillet.

THE POTBOILERMAKERS

By George Jean Nathan

IN the world of modern dramaturgy, the English hack takes categorical precedence over the hacks of Europe and America in the enterprise of writing bad plays as dully as is by human effort possible. The American hack at his worst is always a cut or two above the English hack at his worst: however empty his play there is generally a touch of sharp Americanism, a dash of vulgar honesty, that catches the ear. And the French hack or German hack, the Italian or the Austrian, contributes to his dismal masterpiece at least a flash of phrase or dim suggestion of quasi-philosophy. But the English hack reaches heights of virtuosity in stenciled balderdash unscaled by his drivelling contemporaries.

This is true not only in the instance of dramatic writing, but in the other forms of literature; for the English hack novels of such as the immensely popular Nat Gould are as far inferior to the American hack novels of such as the equally popular Harold Bell Wright, or to the French hack novels of such as the equally popular Henri Bordeaux, or to the German hack novels of such as the once almost equally popular Heinz Tovote, as the English hack plays of such as Horace Annesley Vachell are triumphantly inferior on all counts to the American hack plays of such as William Hurlbut, or the French hack plays of such as Lucien Gleize, or the German hack plays of such as Rudolph Holzer, or the Austro-Hungarian hack plays of such as Vajda Szinház, or the Danish hack plays of such as Carl Gjellerup, or the Italian hack plays of—

But no need to continue the tedious catalogue. Nothing in all the modern writing for the stage attains to the dull splendour of an Englishman writing at his dullest. At his worst the Englishman is as difficult of matching as at his best. Search the records of current theatrical writing the world over and one will be at pains to discover equals in the art of sheer inanity for such British masters of bavardage and twattle as Jennings, Porter, Devereux, Worrall, Morton, Hemmerde, Vansittart, Nielson, Howard, Brandon, Lonsdale, Dunn, Coleby, Martindale, Pleydell, Fenn, Thurston, Terry, Raleigh, Hodges, Percival, Harwood, Vernon, Owen, Parry, Stayton, Frith, Gibson, Hamilton, Jeans, Lion, Merivale, Chilton, Ellis, Carr, Denny, Fernald. . . .

This last, though American born, is by personal vote, long residence, activity, taste and training, as English as a mutton chop or tight shirt, and a typical example of the contemporaneous English rubber-stamp professor. Twenty years ago, this Mr. Chester Bailey Fernald, then living in the land of his birth, wrote a first-rate short story and a second-rate, though rather diverting, one-act play. But in the nineteen years elapsed he has composed not so much as a single phrase touched with grace or originality, with resonance or wit, with melody or observation or philosophy. The plays he has written, from "The Moonlight Blossom" to "The Married Woman," from "98-9" to "The Day Before the Day," from "The Pursuit of Pamela" to his most recent "Three for Diana" out of "The Third Marriage" of Sabatino Lopez, are in

each instance illuminatingly representative of British hackdom on the flying trapeze.

I do not mean to single out Fernald as the worst of this sour school, or even the second worst. He is by no means the worst. But he combines in himself so many of the deficiencies and absent qualities of the present-day British drama drudge that, as well as any other, he may be selected by way of horrible example. It is a characteristic of Fernald, as of his colleagues in the arts of unimaginative writing, that he works almost entirely in terms of the platitudes, treadmills, stock phraseology and stale literary baggage of the stage. And this habit is so deeply ingrained that it operates even when he gives himself over to the transposing of a play manuscript from one language into another, just as it operates in like situation in the instance of such of his fellow doctors of stencil as Fagan, Hicks, Farquarson Sharp, Bithell, et al. In instance whereof, I append a few examples from the adaptation by Fernald of the aforementioned Italian "Il Terzo Marito" (briefly presented in the Bijou Theater)—examples of the substitution of so many coccygine vaudeville-sketch cackles for what might, by the simple and obvious means of direct translation, have been retained as somewhat less banal, moth-eaten stuff:

1. "The mere *sight* of you makes me grow younger. It's like a breath of the sea air!"
2. "*You* are free; *I* am free! What is the use of having freedom if one cannot make happiness out of it? Marry me and the world will be just big enough to hold our happiness!"
3. "I have (*dropping her eyes*) something to tell you. When you have heard me, probably you will want to reconsider your proposal."
4. "I decided to talk the matter over with her once again. She had insisted that we should not refer to it again."
5. "But under that moon, under those silent stars, with the music of the waves beneath us. . . ."
6. "How she has changed in a year! She was a *child* then; now she is a *woman*!"
7. "I wrote you not to come until now because I wanted to give you a chance to think. I wanted you to be prepared for (*pause*) what we shall have to say to each other."
8. "What do *you* know of life? Nothing! There is a great, beautiful world still to be opened to you!"
9. "You have had no experience. You are a beautiful unwritten page."
10. "When I looked into your eyes—I can see your eyes every night whenever I close my own in the dark—the first time I looked into them and every time since—something has happened in my heart."
11. "If I talk lightly about the most serious things in the world, it does not mean that I am frivolous. I was never so serious in my life. And you are not going to tell me (*gulping*) that there is another?"
12. "If you send me off, I shall never get over it as long as I live!"
13. "My own feelings were a trifle hurt, at first; but when you explained, I saw that your intentions were as kindly as they always are."
14. "And what, pray, do you know about *me*?"

Add to these sentimentalized stencils the injection of an alien hooch of morals, the joke about the practise of exchanging duplicate wedding presents, the joke about the climate of England, the joke about married persons fighting with each other, and the joke about woman's habit of changing her mind, and one achieves a fair idea of the Fernald operations in adaptation. I have seldom laid eyes on a sadder job. The

Italian original, true enough, is in the most liberal accounting a third-rate effort, but Fernald has dexterously plunged it thirty pegs further down the scale. He has changed the incandescent Italian lover into a cool cockney cucumber; he has turned the saucy widow into a dour Prince of Wales's Theater clothes-horse; he has removed the gin from the cocktail in Acts III and IV; he has written over the Italian phraseology into the phraseology of the commonplace London curtain-raiser. In the original, a kind of high-comedy matrimonial "Baby Mine"—though in no sense and in no degree so adroit or humorous a work as Miss Mayo's—the play is revealed in the adaptation as a windmill turning furiously in a dead calm.

The production, both as to acting and direction, was in the main of a piece with the quality of the work produced. The actors, when addressing each other, were coached in the obsolete manner to stand shoulder to shoulder, avert their faces and recite their lines straight at the audience, as if each had eaten onions for dinner and, conscious of the lingering aroma, was maneuvering to hide the fact from the other. Mr. John D. Williams, under whose name the presentation was made, appears to have lost completely the share of judgment displayed by him at the outset of his professional career. It demands a very considerable genius to unearth in rapid succession so magnificent a trio of pot-boilers as "Betty at Bay," "Toby's Bow," and this "Three For Diana."

II

THE always idiotic enterprise of attempting a list of the ten best new plays of the season is this year approximately as simple and satisfactory as translating Ring Lardner into Spanish. The attempt to list even six plays of sound worth is not easy. The best play of the year, and by far, was Dunsany's "Laughter of the Gods," presented by Mr. Stuart Walker.

With this play, the only four pos-

sessed of sound merit or approximately sound merit, from the accepted critical points of view, were "The Moon of the Caribbees," by Eugene O'Neill, presented by the Provincetown Players; "Papa," by Zoë Akins, a prompt and overwhelming popular failure, presented (and ruined) by Mr. F. C. Whitney; Rita Wellman's "The Gentile Wife," also a popular failure, but admirably revealed by Mr. Arthur Hopkins; and "John Ferguson," by St. John Irvine, presented by the Stage Guild.

Aside from these leaders, the five plays that appear to me as probably least to the distaste of the kind of theatergoer who prefers Mozart's Jupiter symphony to "Oui, Oui, Marie," Anatole France's "Garden of an Epicure" to Emma C. David's "Polly and the Princess," and an All Saints Madeira to Coca-Cola, were, though not necessarily in the order named:

"The Marquis de Priola," by Lavedan, presented by Mr. Leo Ditrichstein.

"Tea for Three," by Roi Cooper Meigrue out of Karl Slaboda, presented by the Messrs. Selwyn.

"The Jest," translated by Edward Sheldon from Sem Benelli, presented by Mr. Hopkins.

"Sleeping Partners," by Sacha Guitry, presented by Mr. Williams.

"Dear Brutus," by Barrie, presented by the Frohman Company.

These latter, obviously enough, are but purely comparative selections. The majority of them are by no means first-rate plays—or even second-rate plays—but they yet bulk larger than any others vouchsafed the public during the season.

I am this season similarly unable to dredge up ten acting performances among the unstarred or unfeatured men and women players that seem to me worthy of especial notice. The only two non-star or non-featured performances among the women that I can commend for exceptional technical resource were those of Miss Laura Hope Crews in "The Saving Grace" and Miss Margaret Lawrence in "Tea for Three." The best performance of the year by a featured woman player seems to me to

have been that of Miss Irene Bordoni in "Sleeping Partners"; the best star performance that of Mrs. Fiske in "Mis' Nelly of N'Orleans."

Among the unfeatured or unstarred males, I nominate four performances, though concerning one of these I am somewhat dubious. The performances in question were, as I see it, those of Mr. Hamilton Revelle in "Mis' Nelly of N'Orleans," Mr. John Halliday in "A Place in the Sun," the youthful Master Andrew Lawlor in the original casting of "Penrod," and Mr. Dudley Digges in "John Ferguson."

On a lower plane, but relatively good, were the performances of Charles Millward in "The Net," Robert Fischer in "Luck in Pawn," Arthur Byron in "Tea For Three," Edward Douglas in "The Saving Grace," John Cope in "Daddies," George Marion in "Toby's Bow," William Lennox in "Penny Wise," J. H. Brewer in "Dear Brutus," Alfred Kappeler in "Tillie" and Frederic Burt in "Mis' Nelly of N'Orleans." The best featured player performance was that of Mr. Cyril Keightley in "A Little Journey"; the best star performance that of Mr. Lionel Barrymore in "The Jest."

The best productions of the year were the Hopkins productions of "The Jest," "Be Calm, Camilla" (a finely delicate example of staging) and "The Gentile Wife." Mr. Hopkins stands out at present as the American theater's foremost producer. The best ensemble acting was that revealed in Miss Rachel Crothers' production of her own play "39 East." The most diverting music show was George M. Cohan's "The Royal Vagabond"; the most ingenious yokel show, the trick melodrama light "The Unknown Purple"; and the twenty-five worst plays: "Mother's Liberty Bond," "Over Here," "Crops and Croppers," "The Walk-Offs," "The Awakening," "Information Please," "A Stitch in Time," "Perkins," "Not With My Money," "Peter's Mother," "Three Wise Fools," "Remnant," "By Pigeon Post," "Betty at Bay," "Back to Earth," "East is West," "Cappy Ricks," "Just

Around the Corner," "Dark Rosaleen," "A Sleepless Night," "The Fortune Teller," "Luck in Pawn," "A Good Bad Woman," "Come-On Charley," and the Fernald opus described in Chapter I.

For these various selections, I am full of profound and sincere apologies: in the instance of the plays I have endorsed, to the producers for thus somewhat too emphatically drawing the attention of the public to the kind of plays I especially admire and so—as I have often discovered—arousing the public's distrust of them. And in the instance of the plays I have failed to endorse, to the producers for thus so clearly establishing the demerit of the plays in point that the producers will, if past records count for anything, have to scurry around immediately for extra ushers to seat the crowds.

III

EVERY year or so, some gentleman of the theater who is confident that Hall Caine is the next greatest living dramatist to Abraham Schomer and that "Oh go to hell" is a greater dramatic speech than Marc Antony's oration, and who hence regards me as a very crooked critic, issues—via ambassadors—threats to waylay me presently in a dark alley and bite me. For fifteen years, rarely a season that has failed to reveal me to some such gentleman in the light of a potential cookie. But though I have now and then defensively equipped myself with small capsules of sulphureted hydrogen, surprise boutonnières containing hidden squirt guns, old-fashioned strawberry shortcakes, an automatic and very life-like mouse, cachoo powder, loaded cigars, explosive trick matches and a push button containing a pin (worn on the coat lapel), my armament seems never to have been called upon to exhibit its virtuosity.

On certain other periodic occasions some gentleman of the theater, given to the custom of spelling diva with an n and irritated by the critical conjecture that the vocal chords are probably displayed to their fullest advantage when

the singer is in an upright position, complains bitterly to my office and bothers me so much listening to the ululations of my employer that I am compelled, for comfort's sake, to discharge him, take over his interest in the property and run the thing myself in a peaceful manner.

And on certain other occasions some gentleman of the theater, who imagines I have some grudge against him other than the fact that he produces tenth-rate plays and sends me seats to sit through them, accosts me and makes so much noise and so many gestures that I, unable clearly to make out his purpose, think he is trying adequately to tell me how good I am, mistake his extended fist for an invitation to shake hands, warmly shake hands, thank him profusely, and so suffer the extreme embarrassment and discomfort of gaining him for a friend.

I often wonder why these gentlemen who thus attach an absurd and undue importance to me and seek to work my undoing, do not—if they desire effectually to make a fool of me—take a leaf from the unintentional stratagem employed by Mr. David Belasco. I say unintentional because Mr. Belasco undoubtedly duly appreciates—as I myself fully appreciate—that altogether too much attention is paid already to certain dramatic critics by certain producers to whom the dramatic critics in point already pay altogether too much attention. And the notion, therefore, that Mr. Belasco cares one way or the other is ridiculous. But whether he cares or does not care, the fact remains that, slowly but surely, Mr. Belasco is succeeding brilliantly in discrediting me. And the worst of it is that, while year by year I feel myself being thus gradually discredited, I am, as one groping in the dark, helpless to fight against the final relentless, devastating, low estimate of me.

Some dozen or more years ago, when first I began to suggest the infirmities and grotesquely bogus tenets of the Belasco stage and its dramaturgical rites, I was—since Mr. Belasco was then the

Anointed of the great yokelry—looked on as one honest, callous to hocus-pocus, and possessed of sagacious critical eye. And in the several years succeeding, as I continued in the face of the general prostration to make bold to point out (save in the instance of certain isolated excellent productions) the Belasco deficiencies, my reputation for unhoodwinkable veracity continued to grow apace. But did Mr. Belasco so much as peep? Did he so much as *once* threaten to bite me? Did he approach my employers on tiptoe while I was sojourning mayhap at Palm Beach or Coronado and whisper gamy somethings against me into their ears? Did he accost me in foyers and wave his arms at me pin-wheel fashion and denounce me loudly to the assembled scholars? Or did he once refuse me admittance to his theaters? He did not! On the contrary, he continued to treat me, as always he had treated me, with the highest politeness and courtesy, sending me the very best seats in his playhouse accompanied by gentlemanly notes of welcome, causing his minions to check my coat and hat gratis, and making me in every way thoroughly comfortable—and embarrassed. And thus shrewdly bided his time.

For as year after year passed, and as eighth-rate play after eighth-rate play succeeded one another upon his stage, and as he was growing richer and richer, I found myself, though I was writing of the eighth-rate quality of the plays as honestly as I had in the years before, being yet gradually regarded even by my old supporters as one who was undoubtedly prejudiced against the producer of these plays. How, otherwise, could I so regularly damn? How, otherwise, could I so regularly refrain from praise?

Aware of the droll forces thus working against me, I tried all sorts of expedients—letting this bad play down more easily than it deserved, over-emphasizing an actor's good performance in that bad play, and the like—but to little avail. I essayed all sorts of compromises with myself, trying hard

to find something worth while in the different exhibits, hoping against hope to bring myself to like something I ordinarily didn't like. But I honestly couldn't. And I saw my reputation for fairness and integrity slowly slipping from me, as beach sand from the fingers. And I thus doubt that today there is one reader in a hundred who is not a trifle suspicious of me, who doesn't in his heart believe that I have something against Mr. Belasco and am in the habit of using him undeservedly as a chopping block.

Mr. Belasco provides the major difficulty of my critical career. I tell you quite frankly that I see no way to counteract his Machiavellian but ever-smiling courtesy to me. He suavely invites me to his eighth-rate plays; I write that they are eighth-rate plays; and such is the tragedy of prolonged repetition, no one any longer believes me. But, so long as Mr. Belasco is willing, I am willing. I shall continue to accept his invitations. And I shall pray to God that he will soon produce a first-rate play if only to save my critical reputation and my job. I am determined to write praise of him some day, or bust. For another season of "Daddies," "Tiger-Tigers," "Pollys with a Past," "Tiger-Roses" and "Dark Rosaleens" and—so far as anyone believing in my honesty is concerned—I shall be irretrievably lost.

It is the more recent producing technic of Mr. Belasco first to pick out as poor a play as he can find and then assiduously to devote his talents to distracting the audience's attention from its mediocrity. This technic is made visible once again in the instance of "Dark Rosaleen." The work of the Messrs. Hepenstall and Kane, the play is of an almost unbelievable ingenuousness: the ancient fable of the twenty-to-one shot ridden to victory at the last moment by a makeshift jockey, and the consequent lifting of the mortgage. The locale is switched from Old Kentucky to the Emerald Isle and a half dozen hip-hip-hooray allusions to Parnell and a free Ireland have been substituted for

the customary 1890 hip-hip-hooray allusions to John L. Sullivan and a free Ireland, but for the rest the manuscript is the venerable Dazey-Boucicauld salad in which the beloved mare pokes her nose through the open window just before the race and is wistfully God-blessed by her owner, the heroine, and in which the Irishman is presented less as a Synge, Dunsany or O'Donnell than as a comedian in the Rentz-Santley Burlesquers.

The play is carefully staged and is in the main very well acted. On the night I witnessed the performance every patriotic allusion to Ireland was cheered to the echo, amid a tumultuous stamping of feet and boisterous applause, by the large audience which contained among its apparently most enthusiastic and vociferous Irishmen a number of the most suspiciously semitic looking Celts I have seen in a dog's age.

IV

THOUGH it contains the favorite stencil of every young man's first attempt at ironic farce, the Satirical Butler, William Le Baron's "I Love You" is otherwise in the general matter of freshness and humour considerably superior to the average home-made drollery. The piece is in essence a jig-saw of "Crichton," "The Harvest Moon" and other such already familiar plays pieced together with much of the repetitional technic characteristic of Teutonic farce-comedy. But Le Baron goes at his job with a sufficient measure of bright parody to make the thing, at least for the first half of the evening, amusing pastime.

Tony Sarg's admirably maneuvered Marionettes, the best things of their kind that America has brought into the theater, are this season doing a version, by one Hettie Louise Mick, of Thackeray's "The Rose and The Ring." The manuscript is not especially well suited to the marionettes; it is poorly arranged; it is deficient in opportunities for the puppets; it is altogether too deliberate. The performance itself, how-

ever, is excellently managed. And the scenic and lighting arrangements, though contrived on a somewhat too small scale, are accomplished with a quite unusual beauty.

H. S. Sheldon's "It Happens to Everybody" is a crudely written, but frequently comical, farce of the Cohan-Megrue-Winchell Smith school. With more careful nursing, it might doubtless have been developed into a considerable popular success, since it contains at bottom a sufficient amalgam of novelty and hokum to pop the emotions of the Broadway dilettanti. Even in its present rough state, the piece is—as above observed—not lacking in a number of very fair chuckles.

V

ST. JOHN IRVINE'S "John Ferguson," hereinbefore noted, was one of the few distinguished pieces of dramatic writing revealed during the season recently concluded. Though somewhat over-written in its scenes of introspection, the play is sharply imagined and forcefully executed; the characters are drawn with a bold and steady hand; the gaunt fable of the ironic tragedy that descends upon the lonely farmhouse in northern Ireland is related with a simple, ruthless, and compelling vigour. Since it is clear that, in the dramatist's view, life is as a "song sung by an idiot, dancing down the wind," it may seem a trifle odd, however, that he did not see fit to make terminal use of the fairly obvious, yet striking, device of the idiot Clutie's *leit-motiv* piping. The presentation by the Stage Guild was, in the main, very good indeed. And the play, one of the slender handful of plays of the 1918-

1919 theatrical year that made any pretence to artistry.

VI

THERE may be less imaginative music show librettists than Miss Anne Caldwell, but I am not privy to their names. The average libretto by Miss Caldwell boasts all the lavish wit and humour of an essay on gastrohydro-rhea in cirrhosis of the liver. As for the lady's originality, one need not look further than her two most recent *opera*, "The Lady in Red" and "She's a Good Fellow." The former, we find, is a reboiling of the thrice-told tale of the artist who paints a fleetingly observed beauty in the nude, subsequently meets her, falls in love with her, is rebuffed, meets her again, listens to her sweet indignations, looks into her eyes, slashes the canvas, and so preserves her modesty—the whole embellished with such novel wheezes as "What is that painting?", "That is the painting of a chaste woman", "Well, if I had seen her running around the woods with no more clothes on than that, I'd have chased her all right, all right." And the latter a reboiling of Robert Buchanan's venerable pre-Julian Eltinge farce, "The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown"—embellished with such not less novel *mots* as "What is your name, senorita?", "My name is Pepita Mosquito", "Well, somebody is going to get stung all right, all right."

And yet I understand that theatrical managers stand in line outside Miss Caldwell's eighty-acre country estate, their pockets full of cheque books, patiently awaiting their turn to bid upon her masterpieces.



THE CORONER'S INQUEST.

By H. L. Mencken

I

IN all the days of my pastorate in this place, now running, boy and man, to eleven year, I have faced no such stately pile of critical works as that which now rears itself before me. Enumerated, they come to fourteen volumes, and in size they range from Vincent Starrett's thin monograph on Arthur Machen (*Hill*), with its thirty-five duodecimo pages, to the lordly bulk of the second book of "The Cambridge History of American Literature" (*Putnam*), tilting the hay-scales at two pounds eight ounces. And what variety in tone, in point of view, in sobriety and authority! There is the brisk, disarming iconoclasm of Louis Untermeyer's "The New Era in American Poetry" (*Holt*); there is the heavy respectability of the Cambridge and of Prof. Dr. Bliss Perry's "The American Spirit in Literature" (*Yale Press*); there is the terrible thoroughness of Dr. Julia Patton's "The English Village; a Literary Study" (*Macmillan*), and Prof. Dr. William Henri Eller's "Ibsen in Germany" (*Badger*); there is the brilliant, humanized scholarship of Prof. Dr. John Livingston Lowes' "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" (*Houghton*), and Arthur Symons' "The Symbolist Movement in Literature" (*Dutton*), a new and revised edition of an old book; there is the laborious, mole-like diligence of Prof. Dr. George Pierce Baker's "Dramatic Technique" (*Houghton*); and there is, to make an end, the flatulent, amateurish half-information of Albert Mordell's "The Erotic Motive in Literature" (*Boni*), and Howard Willard

Cook's "Our Poets of Today" (*Moffat-Yard*). A great range of tone and method, indeed! It is miles from the sharp, penetrating criticism of Untermeyer and Lowes to the sophomoric prattle of Mordell. It is even further from the impressionistic manner of Symons to the gray, relentless pedagogy of Eller, Baker and the Cambridge headmasters. But in all of these books, including even Cook's and Mordell's, there is, at worst, something worth reading and noting, something that contributes a shadowy mite to the understanding of the matter. And all, save one, are by Americans! More, at least half of them are unmistakably and unashamedly American!

The most stimulating of all these volumes, despite many curious aberrations of the judgment and the fancy, is undoubtedly Untermeyer's, if only because it is the first cogent and exhaustive statement of the case for the new poetry by one who has helped to give it form and direction. The critical literature of the movement, hitherto, has been very unsatisfactory. I need only point to the windy, chautauqua-like pronunciamientos of Vachel Lindsey, the vague and often contradictory announcements of the Imagists, and the hollow guff of Dr. Kreymborg and the other third-raters of Greenwich Village. Mountebankery has too often corrupted the thing; in Lindsey himself, perhaps the most original of the whole boiling, it is often impossible to say where serious purpose ends and mere boob-bumping begins. Even the elaborate expositions of Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound have left a lot to be said, for Miss Lowell always demolishes her

theories by printing dithyrambs embodying them, and Pound is so steadily and heroically indignant that he usually leaves one with the notion that all poetry is evil, including even the kind he advocates. Here Untermeyer stands shoulders above the rest. He is clear, he is positive, he is full of a fine gusto, and yet he keeps his head from first to last, and avoids getting into a sweat over ideas that, after all, may still need a certain amount of revision before they take rank with the binomial theorem. Not that he is timorous, vacillating, temporizing. Far from it, indeed. He thinks he knows what he thinks he knows, and he states it with bounce. But the messianic note that gets into the bulls and ukases of Pound and Miss Lowell is happily absent from his treatise, and so it is possible to follow him amiably even when he is wrong.

And that is not seldom. At the very start, for example, he permits himself a lot of highly dubious rumble-bumble about the "inherent Americanism" and soaring democracy of the new poetry movement. "Once," he says, "the most exclusive and aristocratic of the arts, appreciated and fostered only by little *salons* and erudite groups, poetry has suddenly swung away from its self-imposed strictures and is expressing itself once more in terms of democracy." Pondering excessively, I can think of nothing that would be more untrue than this. The fact is that the new poetry is neither American nor democratic. It started, not in the United States at all, but in France, and its exotic color is still its most salient characteristic. Practically every one of its practitioners is palpably under some strong foreign influence, and most of them are no more Anglo-Saxon than a samovar or a toccata. The extravagant strangeness of Pound, his almost bellicose anti-Americanism, is a mere accentuation of what is in every other member of the fraternity. Many of them, like Frost, Fletcher, H. D. and Pound, have deliberately exiled themselves from the republic. Others, such as Oppenheim,

Sandburg, Giovannitti, Benét and Untermeyer himself, are palpably Continental Europeans, often with Levantine traces. Yet others, such as Miss Lowell and Masters, are little more than translators and adapters—from the French, from the Japanese, from the Greek. Even Lindsey, the most thoroughly national of them all, has also his alien smear, for whatever is most novel and significant in his verse is based plainly upon the rude folk-song of the negroes of the South. Let Miss Lowell herself be a witness. "We shall see them," she says at the opening of her essay on E. A. Robinson, "ceding more and more to the influence of other, alien, peoples. . . ." A glance is sufficient to show the correctness of this observation. There is no more "inherent Americanism" in the new poetry than there is in the new American painting and music. It lies, in fact, quite outside the main stream of American culture.

Nor is it democratic, in any intelligible sense. The poetry of Whittier and Longfellow was democratic. It voiced the elemental emotions of the masses of the people; it was full of their simple, rubber-stamp ideas; they comprehended it and cherished it. And so with the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley, and with that of Walt Mason and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. But the new poetry, grounded firmly upon novelty of form and boldness of idea, is quite beyond their understanding. It seems to them to be idiotic, just as the poetry of Whitman seemed to them to be idiotic, and if they could summon up enough interest in it to examine it at length, they would undoubtedly clamor for laws making the confection of it a felony. The mistake of Untermeyer, and of others who talk to the same effect, lies in confusing the beliefs of poets and the subject matter of their verse with its position in the national consciousness. Oppenheim, Sandburg and Lindsey are democrats, just as Whitman was a democrat, but their poetry is no more a democratic phenomenon than his was, or than, to go to

music, Beethoven's Eroica Symphony was. Many of the new poets, in truth, are ardent enemies of democracy, for example, Pound. Only one of them has ever actually sought to take his strophes to the vulgar. That one is Lindsey—and there is not the slightest doubt that the yokels welcomed him, not because they were interested in his poetry, but because it struck them as an amazing, and perhaps even a fascinatingly obscene thing, for a sane man to go about the country on any such bizarre and undemocratic business.

Thus burdened at the start, Untermeyer quickly throws off his theories and gives us some extraordinarily sound and penetrating criticism of his contemporaries. Now and then, as in the case of Giovannitti, he allows himself too much praise, and now and then, as in the case of Pound, he halts his analysis before he has done full justice, but in the main he is accurate, thorough and fair. His essay on Robert Frost is far better than Miss Lowell's, and I think he also does better with E. A. Robinson than she does. Furthermore, his book is much wider in scope than hers; covers a great many more poets, and so gives a more comprehensive view of the general movement. Finally, he finds space for a brief consideration of various poets who stand quite outside it, among them, Sara Teasdale and Lizette Woodworth Reese, who are much greater artists than any of the bards within the fold. In this outer Alsatia he is less sure-handed than inside. His astounding under-estimate of John McClure in the *New Republic*, happily not included in the present book, will, I trust, become historical and cause him to blush on the gallows. But, taking his bitter with his sweet, he has achieved a book of criticism that is readable, sagacious and good-tempered—in short, quite the best critical work that the new fermentation of minnesingers has yet thrown up.

As for the relative and absolute worth of these rebels against Stedman's Anthology and McGuffey's Sixth Reader, I shall probably discourse upon it

profoundly in the future. At the moment, my impression is that Sandburg and Oppenheim are the best of them—the one an incisive and shocking realist and the other a sonorous rhapsodist, almost biblical in his stately eloquence. Miss Lowell is the schoolmarm of the movement—a pedagogue with brief moments of illumination. She has done half a dozen excellent poems in the Imagist manner, and a great many dull doggerels. There is a good deal that is extra-poetical in her celebrity; if she were Miss Tillie Jones, of Allentown, Pa., we'd hear a great deal less about her. Masters, I believe, is already extinct. What made the great fame of "The Spoon River Anthology" was not so much its grim truthfulness as the public notion that it was improper. It fell upon the country at the height of the sex wave. All of Masters' later poetry is pishposh. Lindsey? Alas, he has done his own burlesque. Frost? A standard New England poet, with a few changes in phraseology, and the substitution of sour resignationism for sweet resignationism. Whittier without the whiskers. Pound? The American in headlong flight from America—to England, to Italy, to the Middle Ages, to ancient Greece, to Cathay and points East. The most picturesque and pugnacious man and withal the sharpest, most resilient mind in the movement. The Others group, the Greenwich vers librists, the Socialist trombonists? They are the street-boys following the callopie.

II

DR. LOWES' book, like Untermeyer's, deals with the new poetry, but his method of approach is far different. Instead of contenting himself with a few pages of general exposition and then plunging into a consideration of concrete poets, he devotes practically all of his space to an elaborate investigation of the nature and materials of poetry. This investigation is conducted with the utmost learning and painstaking, and the result is the most original,

informative, persuasive and entertaining volume by a college critic that these old eyes have rested upon for years and years. It is, in fact, a book that I press upon everyone who would understand what all the current discussion of poetry is about. There are weaknesses in it. It has, for example, a last chapter that doesn't belong to what has gone before, and is intrinsically unsound. But in the main it is a work of extraordinary range, depth and good sense—a work in which very widely dispersed facts are brought together and co-ordinated, and in which mere scholastic diligence is matched by a constant shrewdness and a colorful, ingratiating style. I am amazed to find that Dr. Lowes sits in a chair at Harvard. His tenancy, it appears, is recent; he is lately from St. Louis. Let him hide his "Convention and Revolt in Poetry" under the bed. If it ever gets about that a man so intelligent is on the faculty there will be calls for a general court-martial and the abatement of the outrage.

"The American Spirit in Literature," by Prof. Bliss Perry; "Dramatic Technique," by the eminent Prof. George Pierce Baker, and "The English Village," by Dr. Julia Patton, are far more professorial and Harvardish. Dr. Baker's treatise is an incredibly tedious and stodgy piece of work—a vast assemblage of stale platitudes about the drama, supported by examples so numerous and so lengthy that the student essaying to plow through them must inevitably sicken and die on the way. The notion that the learned pundit conducts a highly successful seminary for playwrights at Harvard and has turned out a great number of adept practitioners is one of the amazing superstitions of the day. If his book accurately represents his teaching, then it is hard to believe that he helps his pupils at all, for what is sound in his book is either obvious on its face or easily accessible in other literature, and what is apparently original is often astonishingly feeble. The trouble with him is that he writes very badly, and is thus unable to make

his discourse interesting. The books of Brander Matthews and William Archer on the same subject are far more useful, if only because they are far better written. Here I mean useful to the aspiring Scribe and Maeterlinck. The broader social utility of the Baker book is much greater; it will, I daresay, bog and discourage many a neophyte, and so hold down the annual production of bad plays.

Prof. Dr. Perry's "The American Spirit in Literature" is a good deal more suave in manner, but in it there is the same paucity of ideas. The volume belongs to a long series called "The Chronicles of America," to be edited by a posse of Yale birchmen, and shows every sign of professorial correctness and emptiness. He says the correct things about Hawthorne and Emerson; he is correctly a bit suspicious of Poe; he has the correct patronage for Mark Twain. Toward the end he essays to describe the American spirit, in literature and in life, in a few amiable paragraphs. It is the spirit, he says, of the camper and pioneer. It is marked by "venturesomeness, . . . a tolerant disposition," a desire to be "foot-loose." I quote only partly, but I hope not unfairly. It seems to me that Dr. Perry is very much in error here. The truth is that the American spirit, as it is revealed in American literature, shows characters almost precisely opposite to those he describes. The American, in all the arts and in the larger play of ideas no less, is perhaps the most timorous and conventional of men. Nowhere else in the world is heresy attacked and punished with such overwhelming ferocity; nowhere else are the official doctrines supported by a more formidable body of fears, prejudices and punitive statutes. To be a Whitman in America, or a Mark Twain of the posthumous books, or a Dreiser, or a Poe, is to run almost as much risk as to be an I. W. W.; there are definite punishments for such contumacy, and they are swift and cruel. All the tolerance of the pioneer has been pumped out of the national soul. What

lies there now is the stupid suspiciousness, the ignorant certainty, the hysterical fear of ideas of the shopkeeper.

The second volume of the Cambridge, like the first, is a monumental and very useful work. It covers the ground thoroughly; it is accurate; it has admirable bibliographies. One does not look for novel notions in such a book; it is professedly a compendium of notions that have been well tested, and contain nothing shocking, and are thus fit for unlimited propagation. But this programme does not exclude plausibility and even charm, as you will find by consulting Prof. Dr. John Erskine's chapter on Hawthorne and Prof. Emory Holloway's excellent summary of the official doctrine about Whitman. Unluckily, it also lets in a certain amount of laborious balderdash, as witness Prof. Dr. Edwin Mims' discourse on the poets of the South and the Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge's heavy effort to prove that Daniel Webster was an ornament of beautiful letters. The Lodge chapter is perhaps the worst in the volume. Lodge himself, I am convinced, is one of the most absurdly overestimated men now flourishing in America. How the theory that he is an intellectual giant can survive a reading of his books or of his speeches in the Senate is more than I can fathom. He is, in fact, a mere phonograph of platitudes, a correct New Englander of the *décadence*, the perfect Bostonian. But this brings me to his politics, and politics has nothing to do with the Cambridge. I advise you to buy the first two volumes, and to put in your order for the third and last. It is a work quite devoid of the brilliance which sometimes marks the corresponding English work, but it is at least honestly made, and as a reference book it has great value.

Two other valuable but seldom readable works are Dr. Patton's "The English Village" and Prof. Dr. Eller's "Ibsen in Germany." The former is a study of the part that the village has played in English literature since the middle of the eighteenth century, and

represents an enormous amount of mole-like diligence. Scarcely a serious English poem, novel or play of the ensuing century has been overlooked. It is the last word in Ph.D-ismus. Dr. Eller goes almost as far. He has sought to find out just what influence Ibsen had upon the modern German drama and just what influence German taste and criticism had upon Ibsen, and to that end he has explored the dramatic reviews for forty years, and prodded into theater programmes and other such documents. The study is to be followed by one of "Ibsen in England," by Miriam Franc, and perhaps by yet other volumes. Its appearance brings forward the fact that a new and complete Ibsen bibliography is something that some patient candidate for the doctorate should undertake. The Halvorsen bibliography, in Dano-Norwegian, is excellent so far as it goes, but it stops with 1901, and thus deals very meagrely with Ibsen's followers and chief commentators. My own collection of Ibseniana is at the disposal of any scholar who cares for the task. More, I shall be glad to keep him in tobacco and malt liquor while he is at it.

Which brings us to Cook's "Our Poets of Today," Symons' new edition of "The Symbolist Movement in Literature," Mordell's "The Erotic Motive in Literature," Starrett's little book on Arthur Machen, and Alexander Bakshy's "The Path of the Modern Russian Stage" (*Luce*). The last-named, I suppose, will be disappointing to those who cherish the common delusion that the Russian stage is vastly in advance of any other. Dr. Bakshy's own text proves that this is not the case. It has some very earnest and competent producers, but in general it is imitative and often it is decidedly second-rate. Among the settings illustrated there is none to equal the best of Gordon Craig or Reinhardt, or, for that matter, the first act scene in "The Jest," as produced by our own Arthur Hopkins. Symons' book is already well known. The present reprint, however, includes some new matter. The essays

on Huysmans, Verlaine, Rimbaud and the others of the symbolist group are excellent, but perhaps the best criticism in the whole volume is in the note on Zola's method, an extremely fine piece of analysis. Starrett's book is so short that he gets little beyond eulogy, but even so he mingles it with sense, and thus one wishes that he would do the thing again and on a larger scale. Cook's volume on the poets is a very bad work—ignorant, lazy, prejudiced, useless. Imagine speaking of Lizette Woodworth Reese as "a new voice in our American poetry," or of Charles Divine as "one of our most important poets," or of Louis V. Ledoux as "conspicuous among the few purely classic (*sic*) poets which American literature had produced!" An obscure maker of doggerel, Anthony Euwer, is praised; George Sterling is not mentioned at all. A flabby introduction by Percy MacKaye completes the atrocity. Mordell is even worse. Seizing upon several notions propagated by the Freudians, he applies them to works of art in the manner of an owlish sophomore. His criticisms are usually childish and his English is execrable. Let Dr. Freud pray to God for escape from ignorant admirers!

III

THE Braithwaite "Anthology of Magazine Verse" for 1918 (*Small-Maynard*) contains, as usual, some of the worst magazine verse of the year. What could be more ludicrous, for example, than Amy Lowell's "The Cornucopia of Red and Green Comfits," surely a maudlin piece of blather, if one was ever penned by mortal hand. Or than some of the doggerel ascribed to Patience Worth, the lady spook? What could be more hollow than the sonnet of Brookes More, or than the "Vanity" of Karle Wilson Baker? The truth is that Braithwaite's pretensions begin to wear distressingly thin. At the start his enthusiasm intrigued and his hard labor called for politeness, but now he grows pontifical, bombastic and ridicu-

lous, and the poet who escapes his collection of bad verse is more to be envied than the one who is included. The true heft of his critical faculty is revealed by the notes on new books of poetry toward the end of his volume. What one encounters there is a critic almost devoid of ideas—in brief, the sort of solemn young man who fills our more intellectual newspapers and weeklies with heavy imitations of the book notices in the *Athenæum*. It is a wonder some other fellow doesn't go into the poetry-anthology business. It would be easy for him to surpass Braithwaite, and incidentally he would probably stimulate and improve Braithwaite.

The short story anthology of Edward J. O'Brien (*Small-Maynard*) is even worse. Braithwaite, in the midst of his purposeful jingles, at least prints, now and then, an excellent piece of verse. But O'Brien apparently excludes everything that is not wholly third-rate. Even when he pays his devotions to an author capable of decent writing, he seems to choose infallibly a story in which that author is at his worst. Consider, for example, Achmed Abdullah. This Abdullah is an extremely competent journeyman, and when he is feeling in the humor can write an excellent story, with shrewd observation in it, and caustic irony, and much structural ingenuity. But there he is represented by a machine-made tale of Chinatown—one of a sort constantly popular in the cheap magazines—a thoroughly standardized model, turned out at wholesale by dozens of obscure hacks. Yet O'Brien opens his collection with this rubbish. Again, there is a story by Burton Kline. Kline, too, has skill; he has done fiction of very fair merit. But his "In the Open Code," here reprinted, certainly does not suggest it. It is, in brief, a banal piece of sentimentality, as artificial and unconvincing as a dyed moustache. And so on, and so on. O'Brien sagaciously observes that the war stories of the past year or so have been vapid and idiotic—and then prints an extra

bad one by Wilbur Daniel Steele as a glorious exception! I say it is bad, but surely it is not as bad as Julian Street's "The Bird of Serbia!"—also solemnly put among the best of the year. . . . Altogether the collection is an intolerable botch. It reveals an almost absolute lack of ordinary judgment, information and taste. That such silly pretensions as those of Braithwaite and O'Brien should be seriously accepted in America, that their verdicts should be solemnly awaited and snuffed over—this is but one more proof of the naïve stupidity of the folks upon whom a literary artist among us must depend for recognition and a livelihood.

IV

A GOOD many miscellaneous books of more or less interest are in the current crop, and I wish I had space to review some of them at length. The fattest and withal one of the most entertaining volumes in the lot is "The Book of Philadelphia," by Robert Shackleton (*Penn.*). It is as thick as an ordinary brick and nearly as heavy. Within are many charming pictures of the huge Pennsylvania village, and much pleasant gabble about its history, and the lingering relics and remains thereof. More than any other town in America, Philadelphia lives in the past. Its great men are all dead; no ideas ever come out of it; it stands for next to nothing in the developing life of the nation. A city of somewhat shoddy shopkeepers, with a proletariat herded like swine by the most putrid of politicians and an imitation aristocracy organized upon sewing-circle principles. But in its history there is plenty of romance, and even plenty of thrills and high courage, and Mr. Shackleton gets some flavor of these things into his book. . . . In "Letters of Susan Hale," edited by Caroline P. Atkinson and Edward E. Hale (*Jones*), the chief scene is old Boston. Miss Hale began to write in 1848, and the Boston personages of more than half a century move through her pages. A sprightly writer, she yet

manages to grow dull toward the end. I daresay one must be a Bostonian to savor it completely, and know Hale from Hale. . . .

The second volume of Guglielmo Ferrero's "A Short History of Rome" (*Putnam*), carrying the story to the fall of the Western Empire, is, like the first, a workmanlike job and extremely well ordered. There is, so far as I know, no better history of Rome in the same compass. It is succinct, and yet it avoids the dryness of a mere summary. E. D. Trowbridge's "Mexico Today and Tomorrow" (*Macmillan*) has the same virtue of sound arrangement. It not only presents a review of the melodramatic history of Mexico; it also discusses the latter-day difficulties of the republic with obviously accurate knowledge, and with no less show of fairness. No other book that I have read describes the causes and events of the revolution more clearly. . . . "Spiritualism," by J. Arthur Hill (*Doran*), is an elaborate defense of spook-chasing by a man, apparently of some intelligence, who believes in it thoroughly. Unluckily, a reading leaves me more convinced than ever that the enterprise is an imbecility, and fit only for senile old maids, male and female. "The Equinox," by Aleister Crowley and others (*Universal*), is a book of magic and quite beyond my comprehension. This Crowley is an ingenious man, but here he deals in ideas that I can't follow. . . . Which brings me to the excellent Modern Library (*Boni-Liveright*) and its new volumes—among them, John Payne's translations of the poems of François Villon, D'Annunzio's "The Flame of Life" (a bad novel, already old-fashioned), a collection of pronunciamentos by Dr. Wilson, and a book of essays on the infernal woman question, by such authors as G. Lowes Dickinson, Elsie Clews Parsons, Edward Westermarck, Lester F. Ward, H. G. Wells, Havelock Ellis and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, with an introduction by the editor, T. R. Smith. This last volume is of unusual interest, and I hope to deal with it again later on.



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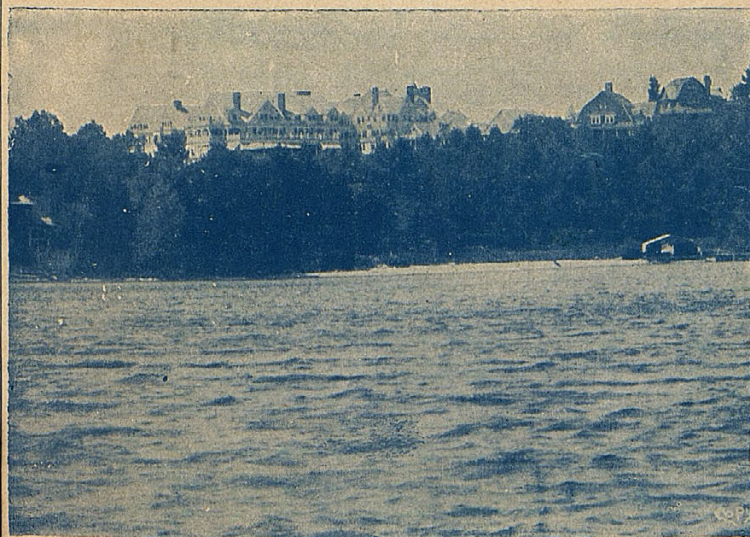
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